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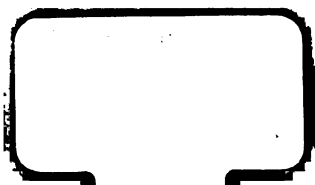
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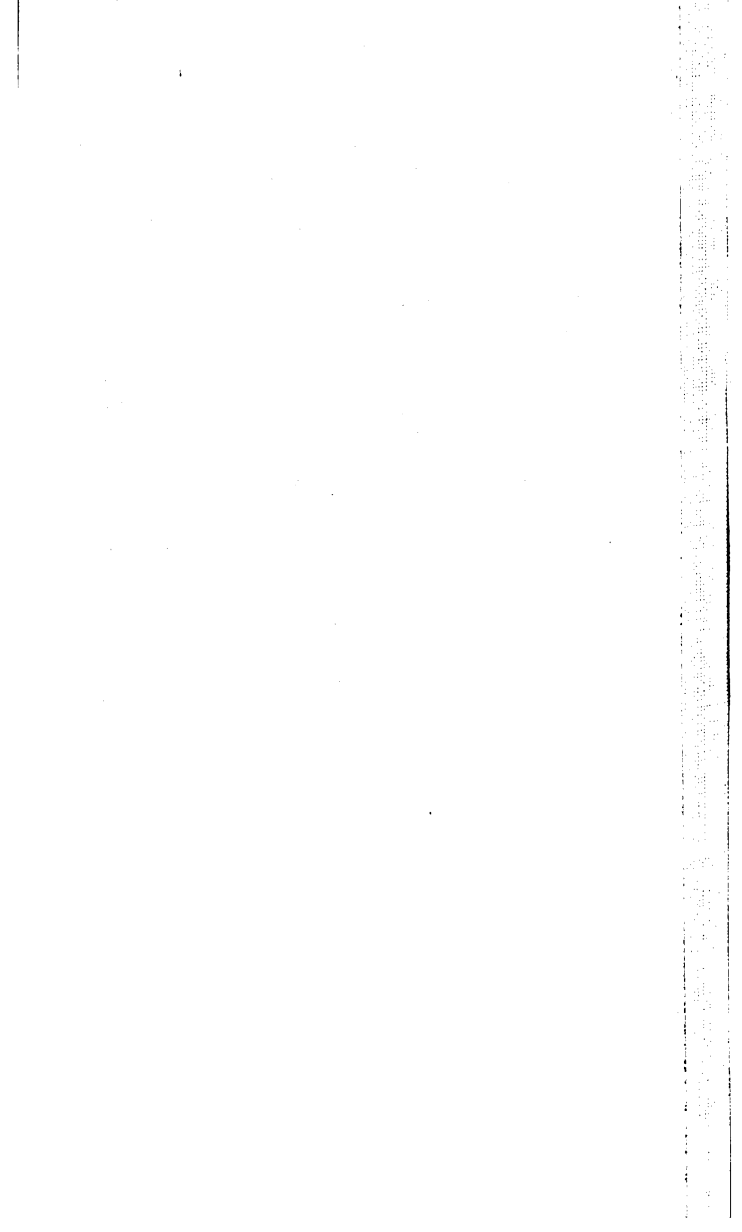
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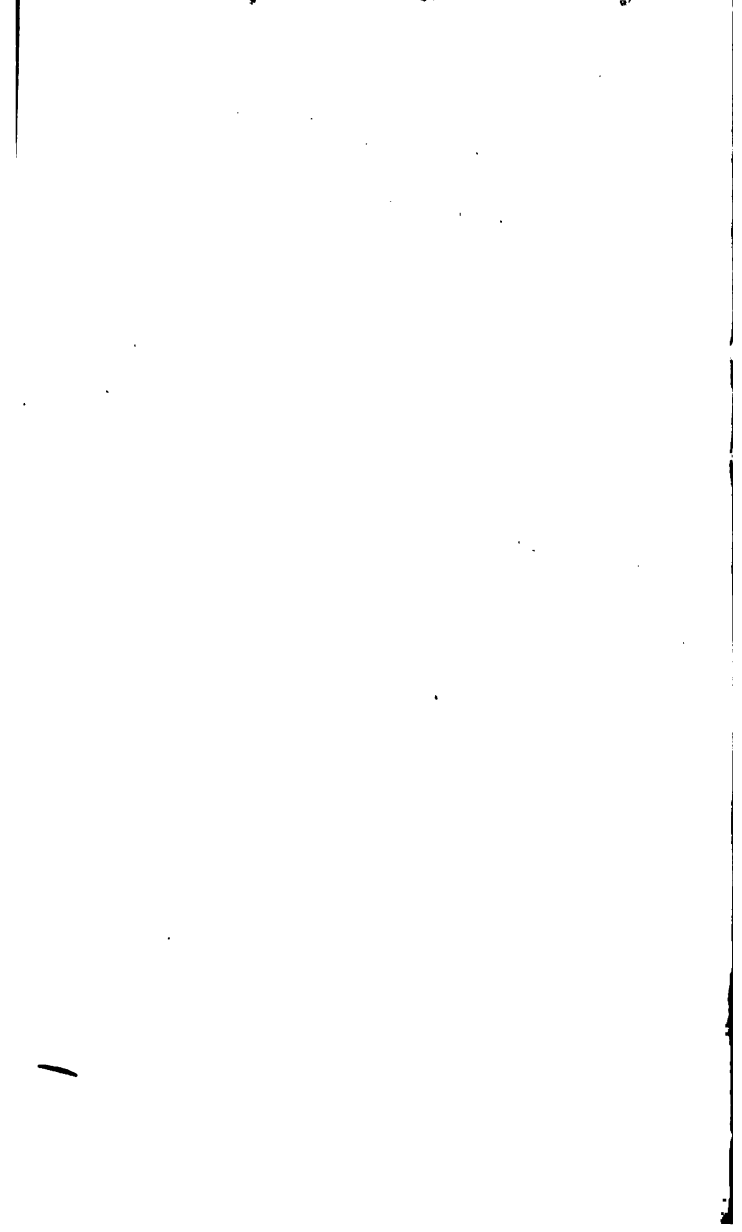
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ON  
THE STUDY OF WORDS:

FIVE LECTURES

ADDRESSED TO THE  
PUPILS AT THE DIOCESAN TRAINING SCHOOL,  
WINCHESTER.

BY

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## P R E F A C E.

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THESE lectures will not, I trust, be found anywhere to have left out of sight seriously, or for long, the peculiar needs of those for whom they were originally intended, and to whom they were primarily addressed. I am conscious indeed, here and there, of a certain departure from my first intention, having been in part seduced to this by a circumstance which I had not in the least contemplated when I obtained permission to deliver them, by finding, namely, that I should have other hearers beside the pupils of the Training School. Some matter adapted for those rather than for these I was thus led to introduce—which afterwards I was unwilling, in preparing for the press, to remove; on the contrary adding to it rather, in the hope of obtaining thus a somewhat wider circle of readers than if I had more rigidly restricted myself in the choice of my materials. Yet I should greatly regret to have admitted so much of this as should deprive these lectures of their fitness for those whose profit in writing and in publishing I had

mainly in view, namely, schoolmasters and those who are preparing to be such.

Had I known any book entering with any fullness, and in a popular manner, into the subject matter of these pages, and making it its exclusive theme, I might still have delivered these lectures, but should scarcely have sought for them a wider audience than their first, gladly leaving the matter in their hands, whose studies in language had been fuller and riper than mine. But abundant and ready to the hand, as is the material for such a book, I did not ; while yet it seems to me that the subject is one to which it is beyond measure desirable that their attention, who are teaching, or shall have hereafter to teach, others should be directed ; so that they shall learn to regard language as one of the chiefest organs of their own education and that of others. For I am persuaded that I have used no exaggeration in saying, that for many a young man "his first discovery that words are living powers, has been like the dropping of scales from his eyes, like the acquiring of another sense, or the introduction into a new world,"—while yet all this may be indefinitely deferred, may, indeed, never find place at all, unless there is some one at hand to help for him and to hasten the process ; and he who so does, will ever after be esteemed by

him as one of his very foremost benefactors. Whatever may be Horne Tooke's shortcomings, whether in occasional details of etymology, or in the philosophy of grammar, or in matters more serious still, yet, with all this, what an epoch in many a student's intellectual life has been his first acquaintance with *The Diversions of Purley*. And they were not among the least of the obligations of the young men of our time to Coleridge, that he so often himself weighed words in the balances, and so earnestly pressed upon all with whom his voice went for anything, the profit which they would find in so doing. Nor, with the certainty that I am anticipating much in my little volume, can I refrain from quoting some words which were not present with me during its composition, although I must have been familiar with them long ago; words which express so well why it is that these studies profit so much, and which will also explain the motives which induced me to add my little contribution to their furtherance:

“A language will often be wiser, not merely than the vulgar, but even than the wisest of those who speak it. Being like amber in its efficacy to circulate the electric spirit of truth, it is also like amber in embalming and preserving the relics of ancient wisdom, although one is not seldom puzzled to de-

cipher its contents. Sometimes it locks up truths, which were once well known, but which, in the course of ages, have past out of sight and been forgotten. In other cases it holds the germs of truths, of which, though they were never plainly discerned, the genius of its framers caught a glimpse in a happy moment of divination. A meditative man cannot refrain from wonder, when he digs down to the deep thought lying at the root of many a metaphorical term, employed for the designation of spiritual things, even of those with regard to which professing philosophers have blundered grossly; and often it would seem as though rays of truths, which were still below the intellectual horizon, had dawned upon the imagination as it was looking up to heaven. Hence they who feel an inward call to teach and enlighten their countrymen, should deem it an important part of their duty to draw out the stores of thought which are already latent in their native language, to purify it from the corruptions which Time brings upon all things, and from which language has no exemption, and to endeavour to give distinctness and precision to whatever in it is confused, or obscure, or dimly seen.”\*

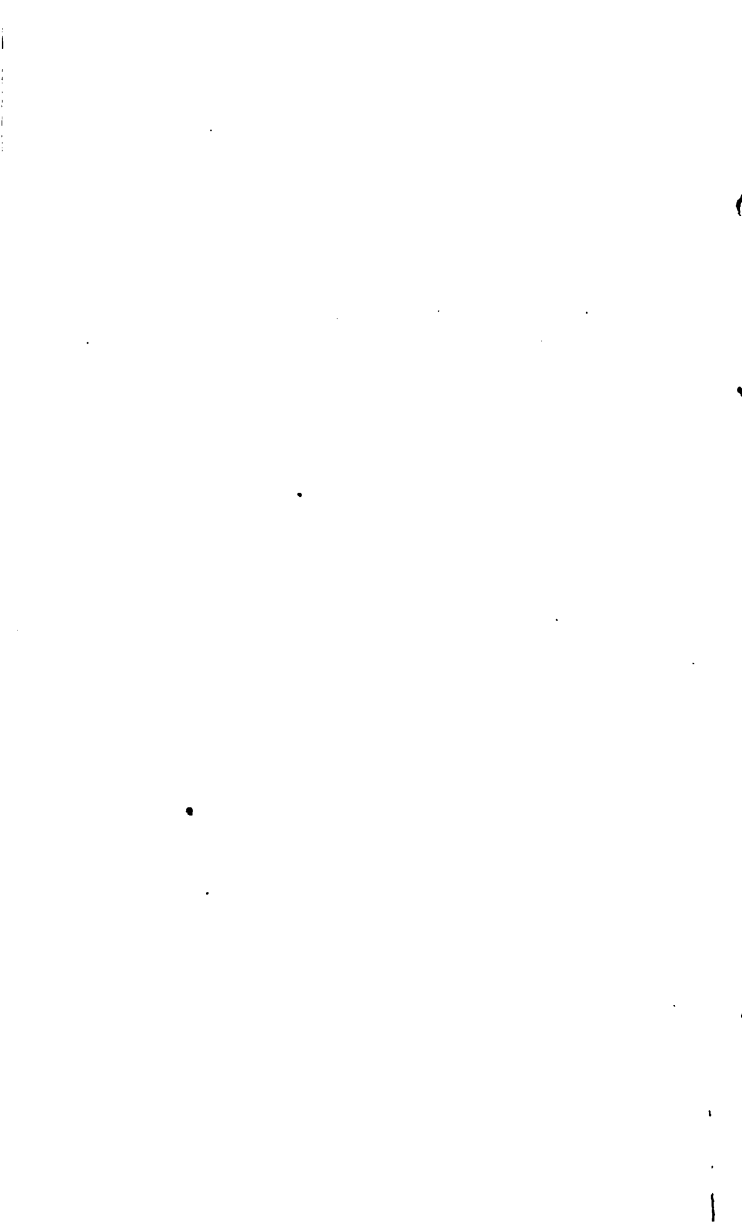
I will only add, that if I have not owned one by

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\* *Guesses at Truth.* First Series, p. 295.

one my obligations to each writer who has helped me here—obligations which readers familiar with the subject will recognise at once—this has arisen from no desire to escape the recognition, but only from the popular character of these lectures, in which multiplied references would have been plainly out of place.

ITCHENSTOKE, *Oct. 9, 1851.*



## THE STUDY OF WORDS.

## INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

THERE are few who would not readily acknowledge that in worthy books is laid up and hoarded the greater part of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which the world has accumulated ; and that chiefly by aid of these they are handed down from one generation to another. My purpose in the present, and in some succeeding lectures, which, by the kindness of your Principal, I shall have the opportunity of addressing to you here, is to press on you something different from this ; namely, that not in books only, which all acknowledge, nor yet in connected oral discourse, but often also in words contemplated each one apart from others and by itself, there are boundless stores of moral and historic truth, and no less of passion and imagination, laid up,—lessons of infinite worth which we may derive from them, if only our attention is awakened to their existence. I wish to show you, though with teaching such as you enjoy the matter will not be new to you, how well it will repay you to study the words which you are in the habit of using or of meeting, be they such as relate to



highest spiritual things, or our common words of the shop and the market, and all the familiar intercourse of life. It will indeed repay you far better than you can easily believe. I am sure, at least, that for many a young man his first discovery of the fact that words are living powers, has been like the dropping of scales from his eyes, like the acquiring of another sense, or the introduction into a new world ; he is never able to cease wondering at the moral marvels that surround him on every side, and ever reveal themselves more and more to his gaze.

We indeed hear it not seldom said that ignorance is the mother of admiration. A falser word was never spoken, and hardly a more mischievous one ; for it seems to imply that this healthiest exercise of the mind rests, for the most part, on a deceit and illusion, and that with better knowledge it would cease. For once that ignorance leads us to admire that which with fuller insight we should perceive to be a common thing, and one demanding therefore no such tribute from us, an hundred, nay, a thousand times, it prevents us from admiring that which is admirable indeed. This is true, whether we are moving in the region of nature, which is the region of God's wonders, or even in the region of art, which is the region of man's wonders ; and nowhere truer than in this sphere and region of language, which is about to claim us now. Oftentimes here we move up and down in the midst of intellectual and moral marvels with vacant eye and with careless mind, even as some traveller passes :

unmoved over fields of fame, or through cities of ancient renown—unmoved, because utterly unconscious of the great deeds which there have been wrought, of the great hearts which spent themselves there. We, like him, wanting the knowledge and insight which would have served to kindle admiration in us, are oftentimes deprived of this pure and elevating excitement of the mind, and miss no less that manifold teaching and instruction which ever lie about our path, and nowhere more largely than in our daily words, if only we knew how to put forth our hands and make it our own.

And this subject upon which we are thus entering ought not to be a dull or uninteresting one in the handling, or one to which only by an effort you will yield the attention which I shall claim. If it shall prove so, this I fear must be through the fault of my manner of treating it; for certainly in itself there is no study which *may* be made at once more instructive and entertaining than the study of the use, the origin, and the distinction of words, which is exactly that which I now propose to myself and to you. I remember a very learned scholar, to whom we owe one of our best Greek lexicons, and who must have bestowed upon it the labour of years, speaking in the preface to his great work with a just disdain of some who complained of the irksome drudgery of such toils as those which had engaged him so long, and this, forsooth, because they only had to do with words; who claimed pity for themselves, as though they had been so many galley slaves chained to the oar, or martyrs who had

offered themselves to the good of the rest of the literary world. He declares that, for his part, the task of classing, sorting, grouping, comparing, tracing the derivation and usage of words, had been to him no drudgery, but a delight and labour of love.

And if this may be true in regard of a foreign tongue, how much truer ought it to be in regard of our own, our "mother-tongue," as we fondly call it. A great writer not very long departed from us has here borne witness at once to the pleasantness and profit of this study. "In a language," he says, "like ours, where so many words are derived from other languages, there are few modes of instruction more useful or more amusing than that of accustoming young people to seek for the etymology or primary meaning of the words they use. There are cases in which more knowledge of more value may be conveyed by the history of a word than by the history of a campaign."

And, implying the same truth, a popular author of our own day has somewhere characterized language as "fossil poetry"—evidently meaning that just as in some fossil, curious and beautiful shapes of vegetable or animal life, the graceful fern or the finely vertebrated lizard, such as now, it may be, have been extinct for thousands of years, are permanently bound up in the stone, and rescued from that perishing which would have otherwise been theirs,—so in words are beautiful thoughts and images, the imagination and the feeling of past ages, of men long since in their graves, of men whose very names have perished, these, which

would so easily have perished too, preserved and made safe for ever. The phrase is a striking one; the only fault which one might be tempted to find with it is, that it is too narrow. Language may be, and indeed is, this fossil poetry; but it may be affirmed of it with exactly the same truth that it is fossil ethics, or fossil history. Words quite as often and as effectually embody facts of history, or convictions of the moral common sense of mankind; even as, so far as that moral sense may be perverted, they will bear witness and keep a record of that perversion. On all these points I shall enter at full in after lectures; but I may give by anticipation a specimen or two of what I mean, to make from the first my purpose and plan more fully intelligible to all.

Language then is fossil poetry; in other words, we are not to look for the poetry which a people may possess only in its poems, or its poetical customs, traditions, and beliefs. Many a single word also is itself a concentrated poem, having stores of poetical thought and imagery laid up in it. Examine it, and it will be found to rest on some deep analogy of things natural and things spiritual; bringing those to illustrate and to give an abiding form and body to these. The image may have grown trite and ordinary now; perhaps through the help of this very word may have become so entirely the heritage of all, as to seem little better than a commonplace; yet not the less he who first discerned the relation, and devised the new word which should express it, or gave to an old, never before

but literally used, this new and figurative sense, he was in his degree a poet—a maker, that is, of things which were not before, which would not have existed, but for him, or for some other gifted with like powers.

Let me illustrate that which I have been saying by the word “tribulation.” We all know in a general way that this word, which occurs not seldom in Scripture and in the Liturgy, means affliction, sorrow, anguish; but it is quite worth our while to know how it means this, and to question the word a little closer. It is derived from the Latin “tribulum”—that word signifying the threshing instrument or roller, by which the Romans separated the corn from the husks; and “tribulatio” in its primary significance was the act of this separation. But some Latin writer of the Christian Church appropriated the word and image for the setting forth of an higher truth; and sorrow and distress and adversity being the appointed means for the separating in men of their chaff from their wheat, of whatever in them was light and trivial and poor from the solid and the true, therefore he called these sorrows and griefs “tribulations,” threshings, that is, of the inner spiritual man, without which there could be no fitting him for the heavenly garner. Now in proof of what I have just now said, namely that a single word is often a concentrated poem, a little grain of gold capable of being beaten out into a broad extent of gold-leaf, I will quote, in reference to this very word “tribulation,” a graceful composition by an early English poet, which you will at

once perceive is all wrapped up in this word, being from first to last only the expanding of the image and thought which this word has implicitly given:

“Till from the straw, the flaile, the corn doth beat,  
Untill the chaffe be purgèd from the wheat,  
Yea, till the mill the graines in pieces teare,  
The richness of the flowre will scarce appear.  
So, till men's persons great afflictions touch,  
If worth be found, their worth is not so much,  
Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet  
That value which in threshing they may get.  
For till the brusing flailles of God's corrections  
Have threshèd out of us our vaine affections;  
Till those corruptions which doe misbecome us  
Are by Thy sacred Spirit winnowed from us;  
Untill from us the straw of worldly treasures,  
Till all the dusty chaffe of empty pleasures,  
Yea, till His flaile upon us He doth lay,  
To thresh the huske of this our flesh away;  
And leave the soule uncovered; nay yet more,  
Till God shall make our very spirit poore,  
We shall not up to highest wealth aspire;  
But then we shall; and that is my desire.”

This deeper religious use of the word “tribulation” was unknown to classical, that is to heathen, antiquity, and belongs exclusively to the Christian writers: and the fact that the same deepening and elevating of the use of words recurs in a multitude of other, and many of them far more striking, instances, is one well deserving to be followed up. Nothing, I think, would more strongly bring before us what a new power Christianity was in the world than to compare the meaning which many words possessed before its rise, and the deeper

meaning which they obtained, so soon as they were assumed by it as the vehicles of its life, the new thought and feeling enlarging, purifying, and ennobling the very words which they employed. This is a subject which I shall have occasion to touch on more than once in these lectures, but is itself well worthy of, as it would afford ample material for, a volume.

But it was said just now that words often contain a witness for great moral truths—God having impressed such a seal of truth upon language, that men are continually uttering deeper things than they know, asserting mighty principles, it may be asserting them against themselves, in words that to them may seem nothing more than the current coin of society. Thus to what grand moral purposes Bishop Butler turns the word “pastime;” how striking is the testimony which he compels the world, out of its own use of this word, to render against itself—obliging it to own that its amusements and pleasures do not really satisfy the mind and fill it as with the sense of abiding and satisfying joy.\* They are only “pastime;” they serve only, as this word confesses, to *pass* away the *time*, to prevent it from hanging an intolerable burden on men’s hands; all they can do at the best is to prevent them from discovering and attending to their own internal poverty and dissatisfaction and want. He might have added that there is the same acknowledgment in the word “diversion,”

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\* Sermon xiv. Upon the Love of God.

which means no more than that which *diverts* or turns us aside from ourselves, and in this way helps us to forget ourselves for a little. And thus it would appear that, even according to the world's own confession, all which it proposes is—not to make us happy, but a little to prevent us from remembering that we are unhappy, to *pass* away our *time*, to *divert* us from ourselves. While on the other hand we declare that the good which *will* really fill our souls and satisfy them to the uttermost, is not in us, but without us and above us, in the words which we use to express any transcending delight. Take three or four of these words—"transport," "rapture," "ravishment," "ecstasy"—"transport," that which *carries* us, "rapture," that which *snatches* us, out of and above ourselves; and "ecstasy" is very nearly the same, only drawn from the Greek.

And not less, where a perversion of the moral sense has found place, words preserve oftentimes a record of this perversion. We have a signal example of this, even as it is a notable evidence of the manners in which moral contagion, spreading from heart and manners, invades the popular language in the use or rather misuse of the word "religion," during all the ages of Papal domination in Europe. ✓ Probably many of you are aware that in those times a "religious" person did not mean any one who felt and owned the bonds that bound him to God and to his fellow-men, but one who had taken peculiar vows upon him, a member of one of the monkish orders; a "religious" house did not



mean, nor does it now mean in the Church of Rome, a Christian household, ordered in the fear of God, but an house in which these persons were gathered together according to the rule of some man, Benedict, or Dominic, or some other. A "religion" did not mean a service of God, but an order of monkery; and taking the monastic vows was termed going into a "religion." Now what an awful light does this one word so used throw on the entire state of mind and habits of thought in those ages! That then was "religion," and nothing else was deserving the name! And "religious," was a title which might not be given to parents and children, husbands and wives, men and women fulfilling faithfully and holily in the world the several duties of their stations, but only to those who had devised self-chosen service for themselves.

In like manner that "lewd," which meant at one time no more than "lay," or unlearned,—the "lewd" people, the lay people,—should come to signify the sinful, the vicious, is not a little worthy of note. How forcibly we are reminded here of that saying of the Pharisees of old: "This people which knoweth not the law is cursed;" how much of their spirit must have been at work before the word could have gotten this secondary meaning.

But language also is fossil history. What a record of great social revolutions, revolutions in nations and in the feelings of nations, the one word "frank" contains; which is used, as we all know, to express aught that is generous, straightforward, and free. The Franks, I need not remind you,

were a powerful German tribe, or association of tribes, which at the breaking up of the Roman Empire possessed themselves of Gaul, to which they gave their own name. They were the ruling conquering people, honourably distinguished from the Gauls and degenerate Romans among whom they established themselves by their independence, their love of truth, their love of freedom, their hatred of a lie: they had in short the virtues which belong to a conquering and dominant race in the midst of an inferior and conquered. And thus it came to pass that by degrees the name "frank," which originally indicated a merely national, came to involve as well a moral, distinction; and a "frank" man was synonymous not merely with a man of the conquering German race, but was an epithet applied to a person possessed of certain high moral qualities, which for the most part appertained to, and were found only in, men of that stock; and thus in men's daily discourse, when they speak of a person as being "frank," or when they use the words "franchise," "enfranchisement," to express civil liberties and immunities, their language here is the outgrowth, the record, and the result of great historic changes, bears testimony to facts of history, whereof it may well happen that the speakers have never heard. Let me suggest to you the word "slave," as one which has undergone a process entirely analogous, although in an opposite direction.

Having given by anticipation this handful of

examples in illustration of what in these lectures I propose, I will, before proceeding further, make a few observations on a subject, which, if we would go at all to the root of the matter, we can scarcely leave altogether untouched,—I mean the origin of language ; in which at the same time we will not entangle ourselves deeper than we need. There are, or rather there have been, two theories about this. One, and that which rather has been than is, for few maintain it now, would put language on the same level with the various arts and inventions with which man has gradually adorned and enriched his life : it would make him by degrees to have invented it, just as he might have invented any of these, for himself ; and from rude imperfect beginnings, the inarticulate cries by which he expressed his natural wants, the sounds by which he sought to imitate the impression of natural objects upon him, little by little to have arrived at that wondrous organ of thought and feeling, which his language is often to him now.

It might, I think, be sufficient to object to this explanation, that language would then be an *accident* of human nature ; and, this being the case, that we certainly should somewhere find tribes sunken so low as not to possess it, even as there is no human art or invention, though it be as simple and obvious as the preparing of food by fire, but there are those who have fallen below its exercise. But with language it is otherwise. There have never yet been found human beings, not the most degraded horde of South-African bushmen, or

Papuan cannibals, who did not employ this means of intercourse with one another. But the more decisive objection to this view of the matter is, that it hangs together with, and is indeed an essential part of, that theory of society, which is contradicted alike by every page of Genesis, and every notice of our actual experience—the “ourang-outang” theory, as it has been so happily termed—that, I mean, according to which the primitive condition of man was the savage one, and the savage himself the seed out of which in due time the civilized man was unfolded; whereas, in fact, so far from being this living seed, he might more justly be considered as a dead withered leaf, torn violently away from the great trunk of humanity, and with no more power to produce anything nobler than himself out of himself, than that dead withered leaf to unfold itself into the oak of the forest. So far from being the child with the latent capacities of manhood, he is himself rather the man prematurely aged, and decrepit, and worn out.

But the truer answer to the inquiry how language arose, is this, that God gave man language, just as He gave him reason, and just because He gave him reason, (for what is man’s word but his reason coming forth, so that it may behold itself?) gave it to him, because he could not be man, that is a social being, without it. Yet this must not be taken to affirm that man started at the first furnished with a full-formed vocabulary of words, as it were with his first dictionary and first grammar ready-made to his hands. He did not thus begin

the world with names, but with the power of naming. Here, as in everything else that concerns the primitive constitution, the great original institutes of humanity, our best and truest lights are to be gotten from the study of the three first chapters of Genesis; and you will observe that there it is not God who gave the first names to the creatures, but Adam—Adam, however, at the direct suggestion of his Creator. He brought them all, we are told, to Adam, “to see what he would call them, and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.” (Gen. ii. 19.) Here we have the clearest intimation of the origin, at once divine and human, of speech; while yet neither is so brought forward as to exclude the other.

And so far we may give a limited amount of right to those who have held a progressive acquisition, on man's part, of the power of embodying thought in words. I believe that we should conceive the actual case most truly, if we conceived this power of naming things and expressing their relations, as one laid up in the depths of man's being, one of the divine capacities with which he was created: but one, and in this differing from those which have produced in various people various arts of life, which could not remain dormant in him, for man could be only man through its exercise; which therefore did rapidly bud and blossom out from within him at every solicitation from the world without, or from his fellow-man; as each object to be named appeared before his eyes,

each relation of things to one another arose before his mind. It was not the possible only, but the necessary, emanation of the spirit with which he had been endowed. *How* this latent power evolved itself first, how this spontaneous generation of speech came to pass, is a mystery, even as every act of creation is such of necessity; and as a mystery all the deepest inquirers into the subject are content to leave it; but we may perhaps a little help ourselves to the realizing of what the process was, and what it was not, if we liken it to the growth of a tree springing out of and unfolding itself from a root, and according to a necessary law—that root being the divine capacity of language with which man was created, that law being the law of highest reason with which he was endowed: if we liken it to this rather than to the rearing of an house, which a man should slowly and painfully fashion for himself with dead timbers combined after his own fancy and caprice; and which little by little improved in shape, material, and size, being first but a log-house, answering his barest needs, and only after centuries of toil and pain growing for his sons' sons into a stately palace for pleasure and delight.

Were it otherwise, were the savage the primitive man, we should then find savage tribes rudely indeed and scantily furnished with the elements of speech, yet at the same time with its fruitful beginnings, its vigorous and healthful germs. But what does their language on close inspection prove? In every case what they are themselves, the

remnant and wreck and ruin of a better and a nobler past. Fearful indeed is the impress of degradation which is stamped on the language of the savage—more fearful perhaps even than that which is stamped upon his form. When wholly letting go the truth, when long and greatly sinning against light and conscience, a people has thus gone the downward way, has been scattered off by some violent revolution from that portion of the world which is the seat of advance and progress, and driven to its remote isles and further corners, then as one nobler thought, one spiritual idea after another has perished from it, the words also that expressed these have perished too: as a people has let go one habit of civilization after another, the words also which those habits demanded have dropped, first out of use, and then out of memory, and thus after awhile have been wholly lost.

Moffat in his *Missionary Labours and Scenes in South Africa* gives us a very remarkable example of the disappearing of one of the most significant words from the language of a tribe sinking ever deeper and deeper in savagery; and with the disappearing of the word of course the disappearing as well of the great spiritual fact and truth whereof that word was at once the vehicle and the guardian. The Bechuanas, a Caffre tribe, possessed formerly the word "Morimo," to express "Him that is above," or "Him that is in heaven," and linked with the word the notion of a supreme Divine Being. This word, with the spiritual

idea corresponding to it, Moffat found to have vanished from the language of the present generation, although here and there he could meet with an old man, scarcely one or two in a thousand, who remembered in his youth to have heard speak of "Morimo:" and this word, once so deeply significant, only survived now in the spells and charms of the so-called rain-makers and sorcerers, who misused it to designate a fabulous ghost, of whom they told the absurdest and most contradictory things.

And as there is no such witness to the degradation of the savage as his language, so is there nothing that so effectually tends to keep him in the depths to which he has fallen. You cannot impart to any man more than the words which he understands either now contain, or can be made, intelligibly to him, to contain. Language is as truly on one side the limit and restraint of thought, as on the other side that which feeds and expands it. Thus it is the ever-repeated complaint of the missionary that the very terms are wholly or nearly wholly wanting in the dialect of the savage whereby to impart to him heavenly truths, or indeed even the nobler emotions of the human heart. Southey in his *History of Brazil* quotes the words of an early Jesuit missionary among the native tribes of that land, who expressly states that two of these, with whose languages he was intimately acquainted, were without any word which would answer to our "thanks." But what wonder, if the feeling of gratitude was entirely absent from



their hearts, that they should not have possessed the corresponding word in their vocabularies? Nay, how should they have had it there? And that this is the true explanation of the absence of the word is plain from a fact which the same writer records, that although inveterate askers, they never showed the slightest sense of obligation or of gratitude, when they obtained what they sought; never saying more than, "This will be useful to me," or, "This is what I wanted."

Nor is it only in what they have forfeited and lost, but also in what they have retained or invented, that these languages proclaim their degradation and debasement, and how deeply they and those that speak them have fallen. Thus I have read of a tribe in New Holland, which has no word to signify God, but has a word to express a process by which an unborn child is destroyed in the bosom of its mother. And yet ever and anon in the midst of this wreck and ruin there is that in the language of the savage, some subtle distinction, some curious allusion to a perished civilization, now utterly unintelligible to the speaker, or some other note, which proclaims his language to be the remains of a dissipated inheritance, the rags and remnants of a robe which was a royal one once. The fragments of a broken sceptre are in his hand, a sceptre wherewith once he held dominion (he, that is, in his progenitors) over large kingdoms of thought, which now have escaped wholly from his sway.

But while it is thus with him, while this is the

way downward of all those that have chosen the downward path, while with every impoverishing and debasing of personal or national life there goes hand in hand a corresponding impoverishment and debasement of language, so on the contrary, where there is advance and progress, where a divine idea is in any measure realizing itself in a people, where they are learning more accurately to define and distinguish, more truly to know, where they are ruling, as men ought to do, over nature, and making her to give up her secrets to them, where new thoughts are rising up over the horizon of a nation's mind, new feelings are stirring at a nation's heart, there language is growing and advancing too. It cannot lag behind ; for man feels that nothing is properly his own, that he has not secured any new thought, or entered upon any new spiritual inheritance, till he has fixed it in language, till he can contemplate it, not as himself, but as his word ; he is conscious that he must express truth, if he is to preserve it. "Names," as it has been excellently said, "are impressions of sense, and as such take the strongest hold upon the mind, and of all other impressions can be most easily recalled and retained in view. They therefore serve to give a point of attachment to all the more volatile objects of thought and feeling. Impressions that when past might be dissipated for ever, are by their connexion with language always within reach. Thoughts, of themselves, are perpetually slipping out of the field of immediate

mental vision; but the name abides with us, and the utterance of it restores them in a moment."

Nor does what is here said of the manner in which language enriches itself contradict the prior assertion that man starts with language as God's perfect gift, which he only impairs and forfeits by sloth and sin, according to the same law which holds good in respect of each other of the gifts of heaven. For it was not meant, as indeed was then observed, that men would possess words to set forth feelings which were not yet stirring in them, combinations which they had not yet made, objects which they had not yet seen, relations of which they were not yet conscious; but that up to his needs, (those needs including not merely his animal wants, but all his higher spiritual cravings,) he would find utterance freely. The great logical, that is grammatical, framework of language, (for grammar is the logic of speech, even as logic is the grammar of reason,) he would possess, he knew not how; and certainly not as the final result of gradual acquisitions, but as that rather which alone had made those acquisitions possible; as that according to which he unconsciously worked, filling in this framework by degrees with these later acquisitions of thought, feeling, and experience, as one by one they arrayed themselves in the garment and vesture of words.

Thus as an example of what I mean, and of the manner in which a language would develop itself from its own resources, we may be sure that our

Anglo-Saxon forefathers would not have possessed a word for a king, so long as the idea of such a ruler and permanent head and representative of the nation had not dawned on them, so long as they had not felt their need of such a head. But when they did, when the ideas of reverence and order which had been slowly ripening in them, were about to find their utterance in and to give birth to a king, from whence should the name of this new creation come? They had already, from whatever quarter they derived it, the word "can," or "ken," to be able, to know; we still retain, both; which are but two forms of one and the same word, witnessing in their identity to men's universal sense that "knowledge is power." And this ruler, what was he to be? whom should they choose? for we are speaking of that earlier period, when not as yet the idea of hereditary kingship had arisen. Surely he should be the ablest man in the nation, the most knowing in council, the most daring in war; the most "kenning" and "canning" man among them; and from this they named him "cyng," or "cyning," which are only earlier forms of our "king." Thus does a language evolve itself out of itself, find resources in itself according to its emergent needs.

Here then is the explanation of the fact that language should be thus instructive for us, that it should yield us so much, when we come to analyze and probe it; and the more, the more deeply and accurately we do so. It is full of instruction, because it is the embodiment, the incarnation, if I

may so speak, of the feelings and thoughts and experiences of a nation, yea, often of many nations, and of all which through centuries they have attained to and won. It stands like the pillars of Hercules, to mark how far the moral and intellectual conquests of mankind have advanced, only not like those pillars, fixed and immovable, but ever itself advancing with the progress of these. The mighty moral instincts which have been working in the popular mind have found therein their unconscious voice; and the single kinglier spirits that have looked deeper into the heart of things, have oftentimes gathered up all that they have seen into some one word, which they have launched upon the world, and with which they have enriched it for ever—making in that new word a new region of thought to be in some sort the common heritage of all. Language is the amber in which a thousand precious and subtle thoughts have been safely embedded and preserved. It has arrested ten thousand lightning flashes of genius, which, unless thus fixed and arrested, might have been as bright, but would have also been as quickly passing and perishing, as the lightning. And thus more and mightier in every way is a language than any one of the works which may be composed in it. For that work, great as it may be, is but the embodying of the mind of a single man, this of a nation. *The Iliad* is great, yet not so great in strength or power or beauty as the Greek tongue. *Paradise Lost* is a noble possession for a people to have inherited, but the English tongue is a nobler heritage yet.

Great then will be our gains, if, having these treasures of wisdom and knowledge lying round about us, so far more precious than mines of Californian gold, we determine that we will make what portion of them we can our own—if we will ask the words which we use to give an account of themselves, to say whence they are, and whither they tend. Then shall we often rub off the rust and dust from what seemed but a common token, which we had taken and given a thousand times, esteeming it no better, but which now we shall perceive to be a precious coin, bearing the “image and superscription” of the great king: then shall we often stand in surprise and in something of shame, while we behold the great spiritual realities which underlie our common speech, the marvellous truths which we have been witnessing *for* in our words, but, it may be, witnessing *against* in our lives. And as you will not find, for so I venture to promise, that this study of words will be a dull one when you undertake it yourselves, as little need you fear that it will prove dull and unattractive, when you seek to make your own gains herein the gains also of those who may be hereafter committed to your charge. Only try your pupils, and mark the kindling of the eye, the lighting up of the countenance, the revival of the flagging attention, with which the humblest lecture upon words and the words especially which they are daily using, which are familiar to them in their play or at their church will be welcomed by them. There is a sense of reality about children which makes them rejoice to discover that there is also a

reality about words, that they are not merely arbitrary signs, but living powers ; that, to reverse the words of one of England's "false prophets," they may be the fool's counters, but are the wise man's money ; not, like the sands of the sea, innumerable disconnected atoms, but growing out of roots, clustering in families, connecting and intertwining themselves with all that men have been doing and thinking and feeling from the beginning of the world till now.

And it is of course our English tongue, out of which mainly we should seek to draw some of the hid treasures which it contains, from which we should endeavour to remove the veil which custom and familiarity have thrown over it. We cannot employ ourselves better ; for there is nothing that will more help to form an English heart in ourselves and in others than will this. We could scarcely have a single lesson on the growth of our English tongue, we could scarcely follow up one of its significant words, without having unawares a lesson in English history as well, without, not merely falling on some curious fact illustrative of our natural life, but learning also how the great heart which is beating at the centre of that life was gradually being shaped and moulded. We should thus grow too in our feeling of connexion with the past, of gratitude and reverence to it ; we should estimate more truly, and therefore more highly, what it has done for us, all that it has bequeathed us, all that it has made ready to our hands. It was something for the children of Israel, coming

into Canaan, to enter upon wells which they digged not, and vineyards which they had not planted, and houses which they had not built; but how much greater a boon, how much more glorious a prerogative, for any one generation to enter upon the inheritance of a language, which other generations by their truth and toil have made already a receptacle of choicest treasures, a storehouse of so much unconscious wisdom, a fit organ for expressing the subtlest distinctions, the tenderest sentiments, the largest thoughts, and the loftiest imaginations, which at any time the heart of men can conceive. And that those who have gone before us have done this for us, I shall rejoice if I am able in any degree to make you feel in the lectures which will follow this present.



## LECTURE II.

## ON THE MORALITY IN WORDS.

IS man of a divine birth and stock? coming from God, and when he fulfils the law and intention of his creation, returning to Him again? We need no more than his language to prove it. So much is there in that which could never have existed on any other supposition. How else could all those words which testify of his relation to God, and of his consciousness of this relation, and which ground themselves thereon, have found their way into this, the veritable transcript of his innermost life, the utterance of the faith and hope which is in him? On no other theory than this could we explain that great and preponderating weight thrown into the scale of goodness and truth, which, despite of all in the other scale, we must needs acknowledge in every language to be there. How else shall we account for that sympathy with the right, that testimony against the wrong, which, despite of all its aberrations and perversions, is yet its prevailing ground-tone?

But has man fallen, and deeply fallen, from the heights of his original creation? We need no more than his language to prove it. Like everything else about him, it bears at once the stamp of his greatness and of his degradation, of his glory and

of his shame. What dark and sombre threads he must have woven into the tissue of his life, before we could meet such dark ones running through the tissue of his language! What facts of wickedness and woe must have existed in the first, ere there could be such words to designate these as are found in the last. There are, who seek to make light of the hurts which man has inflicted on himself, of the sickness with which he is sick; who would fain persuade themselves and others that moralists and divines, if they have not quite invented, have yet enormously exaggerated, these. But are these statements found only in Scripture and in sermons? Are there not mournful corroborations of their truth imprinted deeply upon every region of man's natural and spiritual life, and on none more deeply than on his language? It needs no more than to open a dictionary, and to cast our eye thoughtfully down a few columns, and we shall find abundant confirmation of this sadder and sterner estimate of man's moral and spiritual condition. How else shall we explain this long catalogue of words, having all to do with sin, or with sorrow, or with both? How came they there? We may be quite sure that they were not invented without being needed, that they have each a correlative in the world of realities. I open the first letter of the alphabet; what means this "Ah," this "Alas," these deep and long-drawn sighs of humanity, which at once we encounter there? And then presently follow words such as these, Affliction, Anguish, Assassin, Atheist, Avarice, and twenty more—words,

you will observe, for the most part not laid up in the recesses of the language, to be drawn forth and used at rare opportunities, but occupying many of them its foremost ranks. And indeed, as regards abundance, it is a melancholy thing to observe how much richer is every vocabulary in words that set forth sins, than in those that set forth graces. When St. Paul (Gal. v. 19—23) would put these against those, “the works of the flesh” against “the fruit of the Spirit,” those are seventeen, these only nine; and where do we find in Scripture such lists of graces as we do, 2 Tim. iii. 2; Rom. i. 29—31, of their opposites?

Nor can I help taking note, in the oversight and muster from this point of view of the words which constitute a language, of the manner in which it has been put to all its resources that so it may express the infinite varieties, now of human suffering, now of human sin. Thus what a fearful thing is it that a language should have a word to express the joy which men feel at the calamities of others; for the existence of the word bears testimony to the existence of the thing. And yet in the Greek language such a word is found. Nor are there wanting in it, nor I suppose in any language, words which are the mournful record of the strange wickednesses which the fertile genius of man, wise to do evil, has invented. Thus a great Latin historian tells us of a Roman Emperor, one of those “inventors of evil things,” to whom the Apostle alludes, (Rom. i. 30,) that he caused words unknown before to emerge in the Latin tongue, for the setting forth of wicked-

nesses, happily unknown before, which he had imagined.

And our dictionaries, while they tell us much, yet will not tell us all. How shamefully rich is the language of the vulgar in all lands in words which are not allowed to find place in books, yet which live as a sinful oral tradition on the lips of men, to set forth that which is unholy and impure. And of these words, as no less of those which have to do with the kindred sins of revelling and excess, how many set evil forth with an evident sympathy and approbation, as taking part with the sin against Him who has forbidden it under pain of his extremest displeasure. How much wit, how much talent, yea, how much imagination must have stood in the service of an evil world, before it could have a nomenclature so rich, so varied, and often so heaven-defying as it has.

How many words men have dragged downward with themselves, and made partakers more or less of their own fall. Having originally an honourable significance, they have yet, with the deterioration and degeneration of those that used them, deteriorated and degenerated too. What a multitude of words originally harmless, have assumed an harmful as their secondary meaning; how many worthy have acquired an unworthy. Thus "knave" meant once no more than lad, "villain" than peasant; "a boor" was only a farmer, "a churl" but a strong fellow. "Timeserver" was used two hundred years ago quite as often for one in an honourable as in a dishonourable sense "serving the

time." There was a time when "conceits" had nothing conceited in them; "officious" had reference to offices of kindness, not of busy meddling; "moody" was that which pertained to a man's mood, without any gloom or sullenness implied. "Demure," (which is, *des mœurs*, of good manners,) conveyed no hint, as it does now, of an over-doing of the outward demonstrations of modesty; in "crafty" and "cunning" there was nothing of crooked wisdom implied, but only knowledge and skill; "craft" indeed, still retains very often its more honourable use, a man's "craft" being his skill, and then the trade in which he is well skilled. And think you that the Magdalen could have ever given us "maudlin" in its present contemptuous application, if the tears of penitential weeping had been held in due honour in the world? "Tinsel," from the French *étincelle*, meant once any thing that sparkles or glistens; thus, "cloth of tinsel" would be cloth inwrought with silver and gold: but the sad experience that "all is not gold that glitters," that much which shows fair and specious to the eye is yet worthless in reality, has caused the word imperceptibly to assume the meaning which it now has, and when we speak of "tinsel," either literally or figuratively, we always mean now that which has no reality of sterling worth underlying the glittering and specious shows which it makes. "Tawdry," which is a word of curious derivation, though I will not pause to go into it, has undergone exactly the same process; it once had no significance of *mean* finery, or *shabby* splendour, as now it has.

A like deterioration through use may be traced in the word "to resent." It was not very long ago that Barrow could speak of the good man as a faithful "resenter" and requiter of benefits, of the duty of testifying an affectionate "resentment" of our obligations to God. But, alas! the memory of benefits fades and fails from us so much more quickly than that of injuries; that which we afterwards remember and revolve in our minds is so much more predominantly the wrongs real or imaginary which men have done us, than the favours they have bestowed on us, that "to resent" in our modern English has come to be confined entirely to that deep reflective displeasure which men entertain against those that have done, or whom they believe to have done, them wrong. And this leads us to inquire how it comes to pass that we do not speak of the "retaliation" of benefits, as often as the "retaliation" of injuries? The word does but signify the again rendering as much as we have received; but this is so much seldomer thought of in regard of benefits than of wrongs, that the word, though not altogether unused in this its worthier sense, has yet a strange and somewhat unusual sound in our ears when so employed. Were we to speak of a man "retaliating" kindnesses, I am not sure that every one would understand us.

Neither is it altogether satisfactory to take note that "animosity," according to its derivation, means no more than spiritedness; that in the first use of the word in the later Latin to which it

belongs, it was employed in this sense; was applied, for instance, to the spirit and fiery courage of the horse; but that now it is applied to only one kind of vigour and activity, that namely which is displayed in enmity and hate, and expresses a spiritedness in these. Does not this look too much as if these oftenest stirred men to a lively and vigorous activity?

And then what a mournful witness for the hard and unrighteous judgments we habitually form of one another lies in the word "prejudice." The word of itself means plainly no more than a judgment formed beforehand, without affirming any thing as to whether that judgment be favourable or unfavourable to the person about whom it is formed. Yet so predominantly do we form harsh, unfavourable judgments of others before knowledge and experience, that a "prejudice," or judgment before knowledge and not grounded on evidence, is almost always taken to signify an unfavourable anticipation about him; and "prejudicial" has actually acquired a secondary meaning of anything which is mischievous or injurious.

As these words are a testimony to the *sin* of man, so there is a signal testimony to the *infirmity* of man, to the limitation of human faculties and human knowledge, in the word "to retract." To retract means properly, as its derivation declares, no more than to handle over again, to reconsider. And yet, so certain are we to find in a subject which we reconsider or handle a second time, that which was at the first rashly, inaccurately, stated, that which needs therefore to be amended, changed,

withdrawn; that "to retract" could not tarry long with its primary meaning of reconsidering; and has come to signify, as we commonly use it, to withdraw. Thus a great writer of the Latin Church, at the close of his life wishing to amend whatever he might now perceive in his various published works to have been incautiously or incorrectly stated, gave to the book in which he carried out this intention (for they had then no such opportunities as second and third editions afford now) this very name of "Retractations," being strictly rehandlings, but in fact, as any one turning to the work will at once perceive, withdrawals of various statements which he now considered to need thus to be withdrawn. What a seal does this word, in the secondary use which it acquired, set to the proverb, *humanum est errare*.

At the same time urging, as I have thus done, this degeneration of words, I should greatly err, failing to bring before you the fact that a counter process of purifying and ennobling has also been going forward, especially through the influences of Christianity; which, as it has turned *men* from evil to good, or has lifted them from a lower earthly goodness to an higher heavenly, so has it in like manner elevated, purified, and ennobled a multitude of the words which they employ, until these which once expressed only an earthly good, express now an heavenly. The Gospel of Christ, as it is the redemption of man, so is it in a multitude of instances the redemption of his word, freeing it



from the bondage of corruption, that it should no longer be subject to vanity, or stand any more in the service of sin or of the world, but in the service of God and of his truth. In the Greek language there is a word for "humility;" but this humility meant for the Greek—that is, with very rarest exceptions—meanness of spirit. He who brought in the Christian grace of humility did in so doing rescue also the word which expressed it for nobler uses, and to an higher honour than hitherto it had attained. The word "Paradise" was common in slightly different forms to almost all the nations of the East; but they meant by it only some royal park or garden of delights; till for the Jew it was exalted to signify the wondrous abode of our first parents; and higher honours awaited it still, when, on the lips of the Lord, it signified the blissful waiting-place of happy departed souls; (Luke xxiii. 43;) yea, the heavenly blessedness itself. (Rev. ii. 7.) Or consider the word "regeneration." It was not unknown to the Greeks: they could speak of the earth's regeneration in the spring time, of memory as the regeneration of knowledge; the Jewish historian could describe the return of his countrymen from the Babylonian captivity, and their re-establishment under Cyrus in their own land, as the regeneration of the Jewish state; but the word, on the lips either of Jew or Greek, was still very far removed from that honour which was reserved for it in the Christian dispensation—namely, that it should be the bearer of one of the greatest and most blessed mysteries of the

faith. And many other words in like manner there are, "fetched from the very dregs of paganism,"\* as one has said, which yet the Holy Spirit has been pleased to employ for the setting forth of the great truths of our redemption. Reversing in this the impious deed of Belshazzar, who profaned the sacred vessels of God's house to sinful and idolatrous uses, (Dan. v. 2) that blessed Spirit has often consecrated the very idol vessels of Babylon to the service of the sanctuary.

Let us now proceed to consider some of the attestations for God's truth, and then some of the playings into the hands of the devil's falsehood, which may be found to lurk in words. And first, the witnesses to God's truth, the falling in of our words with his unchangeable Word: for these as the true uses of the word, while the other are only its abuses, have a prior claim to be considered. Some modern false prophets, who wish to explain away all the phenomena of the world around us, which declare man to be a sinful being and enduring the consequences of sin, tell us that pain is only a subordinate kind of pleasure, or at worst that it is a sort of needful hedge and guardian of pleasure. But there is deeper feeling in the universal heart of man, bearing witness to something very different from this shallow explanation of the existence of pain in the present economy of the world

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\* Sanderson, Sermons, 1671, v. 2. p. 124. He instances the Latin "sacrament," the Greek "mystery."

—namely, that it is the correlative of sin, that it is *punishment*; and to this the word “pain,” which there can be no reasonable doubt is derived from “*pcena*,” bears continual witness. Pain is punishment; so does the word itself declare, no less than the conscience of every one that is suffering it. Just so, again, there are those who will not hear of great pestilences being God’s scourges of men’s sins; who fain would find out natural causes for them, and account for them by the help of these. I remember it was thus with too many during both our fearful visitations from the cholera. They may do so, or imagine that they do so; yet every time they use the word “plague,” they implicitly own the fact which they are endeavouring to deny; for “plague” means properly and according to its derivation, “blow,” or “stroke;” and was a title given to these terrible diseases, because the great universal conscience of men, which is never at fault, believed and confessed that these were “strokes” or “blows” inflicted by God on a guilty and rebellious world. With reference to such words so used we may truly say: *Vox populi vox Dei*, The voice of the people is the voice of God—a proverb which shallowly interpreted may be made to contain a most mischievous falsehood; but interpreted in the sense wherein no doubt it was spoken, a deepest truth. We must only remember that this “people” is not the populace either in high place or in low; and that this “voice of the people” is not any momentary outcry, but the consenting testimony of the good and wise, of those neither

brutalized by ignorance, nor corrupted by a false cultivation, in all places and in all times.

Every one who admits the truth which lies in this saying must, I think, acknowledge it as a remarkable fact, that men should have agreed to apply the word "miser," or miserable, to the man eminently addicted to the vice of covetousness, to him who loves his money with his whole heart and soul. Here too the moral instinct lying deep in all hearts has borne testimony to the tormenting nature of this vice, to the gnawing cares with which even here it punishes him that entertains it, to the enmity which there is between it and all joy; and the man who enslaves himself to his money is proclaimed in our very language to be a "miser," or miserable man.

How deep an insight into the failings of the human heart is implied in many words; and in many, if only we would attend to them, what valuable warnings against subtle temptations and sins! Thus, all of us have probably felt, more or less, the temptation of seeking to please others by a cowardly assenting to the view of any matter which they take, even when our own independent convictions would lead us to a different. It is worthy of note, that the existence of such a temptation, and the fact that too many yield to it, is all declared in a word which the Latin uses to designate a flatterer—"assentator"—that is, "an assenter;" one who has not courage to say No, when a Yes is expected from him: and quite independently of the Latin, the German language,

in the word "Jaherr," or "a yea-Lord," which it employs in a sense precisely equivalent, contains a word which, in its contemptuous use, warns us against all such unmanly compliances.—Not less instructive in this aspect is our present employment of the word "libertine." It signified, according to its earliest use in French and in English, a speculative free-thinker in matters of religion, and in the theory of morals, or, it might be, of government. But as by a sure process *free-thinking* does and will end in *free-acting*, so the word came in two or three generations to signify a profligate, especially in relation to women, a licentious and debauched person.

There is much too that we may learn from looking a little closely at the word "passion." We sometimes think of the "passionate" man as a man of strong will, and of real though ungoverned energy. But this word declares to us most plainly the contrary; for it, as a very solemn use of it declares, means properly "suffering;" and a passionate man is not a man doing something, but one suffering something to be done on him. When then a man or child is "in a passion," this is no coming out in him of a strong will, of a real energy, but rather the proof that for the time at least he has no will, no energy; he is suffering, not doing—suffering his anger, or what other evil temper it may be, to lord over him without control. Let no one then think of passion as a sign of strength. As reasonably might one assume that it was a proof of a man being a strong man that he

was often well beaten. Such a fact would be evidence that a strong man was putting forth his strength on him, but of anything rather than that he himself was strong. The same sense of passion and feebleness going together, of the first being the fruit of the second, lies, as I may remark by the way, in the two-fold use of the Latin word "impotens"—which, meaning first weak, means then violent; and often the two together.

In our use of the word "talents," as when we say, "a man of talents," or "a talented man," there is a clear recognition of the responsibilities which go along with the possession of intellectual gifts and endowments, whatsoever they may be. There can be no doubt that we draw the word from the parable in Scripture in which various talents, more and fewer, are committed to the several servants by their lord, that they may trade with them in his absence, and give an account of them at his return. Men may choose to forget the ends for which their talents were given them; they may turn them to selfish ends; they may glorify themselves in them, instead of glorifying the Giver; they may practically deny that they were given at all; yet in this word abides a continual memento that they were so given, or rather lent, and that each man shall have to render an account of their use.

Let us a little consider the word "kind." We speak of a "kind" person, and we speak of man—"kind," and perhaps, if we think about the matter at all, we seem to ourselves to be using quite different words, or the same word in senses quite

unconnected, and having no bond between them. But they are connected, and that most closely; a "kind" person is a "kinned" person, one of kin; one who acknowledges and acts upon his kinship with other men, confesses that he owes to them, as of one blood with himself, the debt of love. And so *mankind* is *mankinned*.\* In the word is contained a declaration of the relationship which exists between all the members of the human family; and seeing that this relationship in a race now scattered so widely and divided so far asunder can only be through a common head, we do in fact every time that we use the word "mankind," declare our faith in the one common descent of the whole race of man. And beautiful before, how much more beautiful now do the words "kind" and "kindness" appear, when we perceive the root out of which they grow; that they are the acknowledgment in deeds of love of our kinship with our brethren; and how profitable to keep in mind that a lively recognition of the bonds of blood, whether of those closer ones which unite us to that whom by best right we term our family, or those wider ones which knit us to the whole human family, that this is the true source out of which all genuine love and affection must spring; for so

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\* Thus it is not a mere play upon words, but something much deeper, which Shakespeare puts into Hamlet's mouth, when speaking of his father's brother who had married his mother, he characterizes him as "A little more than *kinned*, and less than *kind*."

much is affirmed in our daily, hourly use of the word.

And other words there are, having reference to the family and the relations of family life, which are not less full of teaching, which may serve each to remind of some duty. For example, "husband" is properly "house-band," the band and bond of the house, who shall bind and hold it together. Thus, Old Tusser in his *Points of Husbandry*:

"The name of the husband what is it to say?  
Of wife and of household the band and the stay:"

so that the very name may put him in mind of his authority, and of that which he ought to be to all the members of the house. And the name "wife" has its lesson too, although not so deep a one as the equivalent word in some other tongues. It belongs to the same family of words as "weave," "woof," "web," and the German, "weben." It is a title given to her who is engaged at the web and woof, these having been the most ordinary branches of female industry, of wifely employment, when the language was forming. So that in the word itself is wrapped up a hint of earnest in-door stay-at-home occupations, as being the fittest for her who bears this name.

But it was observed just now that there are also words which bear the slime on them of the serpent's trail; and the uses of words, which imply moral evil,—I say not upon their parts who now employ them in the senses which they have acquired, but



on theirs from whom little by little they received their deflection, and were warped from their original rectitude. Thus for instance is it with the word "prude," signifying as now it does a woman with an over-scrupulous affectation of a modesty which she does not really feel, and betraying the absence of the reality by this over-preciseness and niceness about the shadow. This use of the word must needs have been the result of a great corruption of manners in them among whom it grew up. Goodness must have gone strangely out of fashion, before this was possible. For "prude," which is a French word, means virtuous or prudent; "prud'homme" was a man of courage and probity. But where morals are greatly and almost universally relaxed, virtue is often treated as hypocrisy; and thus, in a dissolute age, and one disbelieving the existence of any inward purity, the word "prude" came to designate an affected virtue, such as all virtue was then esteemed; and in this use of it, which, having once acquired, it continues to retain, abides an evidence of the corrupt world's dislike to and disbelief in the realities of goodness, its willingness to treat them as mere hypocrisies and shows.

Again, why should the word "simple" be used slightly, and "simpleton" more slightly still? In itself and according to its derivation the word means "without fold," *sine plicâ*; just what we may imagine Nathanael to have been, and what our Lord attributed as the highest honour to him, the "Israelite without guile;" and, indeed, what higher honour could there be than to have nothing double

about us, to be without duplicities or folds? Even the world, that despises "simplicity," does not profess to approve of "duplicity," or double-foldedness. But inasmuch as we feel that in a world like ours such a man will make himself a prey, is likely to prove no match for the fraud and falsehood which he will everywhere meet around him, and as there is in most men that which, if they were obliged to choose between deceiving and being deceived, would make them choose the former, it has come to pass that the word "simple," which in a world of righteousness would be one of highest honour, implies here in this world of ours, something of scorn for the person to whom it is applied. And must it not be confessed to be a striking fact that exactly in the same way a person of deficient intellect is called an "innocent;" that is *in nocens*, one that does not hurt? so that this word assumes that the first and chief use men make of their intellectual powers will be to do hurt, that where they are wise, it will be to do evil. What a witness does human language here bear against human sin!

Nor are these isolated examples of the contemptuous application of words expressive of goodness. They meet us on every side. Thus "silly," written "seely" in our earlier English, is beyond a doubt the German "selig," which means "blessed." We see the word in its transition state in our early poets, with whom the "silly" sheep is an affectionate epithet, expressive of their harmlessness and innocence. With a still slighter departure from its original meaning, an early English poet applies

the word to the Lord of Glory himself, while yet an infant of days, styling him "this harmless *silly* babe." But here a like process went forward as with the words "simple" and "innocent." And the same moral phenomenon repeats itself continually. For example: at the first promulgation of the Christian faith, and while yet the name of its Divine Founder was somewhat new and strange to the ears of the heathen, they were wont, some perhaps out of ignorance, but more of intention, slightly to mispronounce this name, as though it had not been "Christus," but "Chrestus," that word signifying in Greek "benevolent," or "benign." That they who did it of intention meant no honour hereby to the Lord of Life, but the contrary, is certain; and indeed the word, like the "silly," "innocent," "simple," of which we have already spoken, had already contracted a slight tinge of contempt, or else there would have been no inducement to fasten it on the Saviour. What a strange shifting of the moral sense there must have been, before it could have done so, before men could have found in a name implying benignity and goodness a nickname of scorn. The French have their "*bonhomme*" with the same undertone of contempt, the Greeks also a well-known word. It is to the honour of the Latin, and is very characteristic of the best side of Roman life, that "*simplex*" and "*simplicitas*" never acquired this abusive signification.

Again, we all know how prone men are to ascribe to chance or fortune those good gifts and blessings

which indeed come directly from God—to build altars to fortune rather than to Him who is the author of every good thing. And this faith of theirs, that their blessings, even their highest, come to them by a blind chance, they have incorporated in a word; for “happy” and “happiness” are of course connected with and derived from “hap,” which is chance. But how unworthy is this word to express any true felicity, of which the very essence is that it excludes hap or chance, that the world neither gave it nor can take it away. It is indeed *more* objectionable than “lucky” and “fortunate,” objectionable as also are these, inasmuch as by the “happy” man we mean much more than by the “fortunate.” Very nobly has a great English poet protested against the misuse of the latter word, when of one who had lost indeed everything beside, but, as he esteemed, had kept the truth, he exclaims:

“Call not the royal Swede *unfortunate*,  
Who never did to *fortune* bend the knee.”

But another way in which the immorality of words mainly displays itself, one too in which perhaps they work their greatest mischief, is that of giving honourable names to dishonourable things, making sin plausible by dressing it out sometimes even in the very colours of goodness, or if not so, yet in such as go far to conceal its own native deformity. “The tongue,” as St. James has declared, “is *a world* of iniquity;” (iii. 6;) or as some interpreters affirm the words ought rather to

be translated, and they would be then still more to our purpose, "*the ornament of iniquity*," that which sets it out in fair and attractive colours: and those who understand the original will at once perceive that such a meaning may possibly lie in the words. On the whole I do not believe that these expositors are right, yet certainly the connexion of the Greek word for "tongue" with our "gloze," "glossy," with the German "gleissen," to smoothe over or polish, with an obsolete Greek word also, which in like manner signifies "to polish," is not accidental, but real, and may well suggest some searching thoughts as to the uses whereunto we turn this "*best*," but, as it may therefore prove also, this *worst*, "member that we have."

How much wholesomer on all accounts is it that there should be an ugly word for an ugly thing, one involving moral condemnation and disgust, even at the expense of a little coarseness, rather than one which plays fast and loose with the eternal principles of morality, which shifts the divinely reared landmarks of right and wrong, thus bringing the user under the woe of them "that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put sweet for bitter, and bitter for sweet," (Isa. v. 20.)—a text on which South has written four of his greatest sermons, with reference to this very matter, and bearing this striking title, "On the fatal imposture and force of words." How awful, yea how fearful, is this force and imposture of theirs, leading men captive

at will. There is an atmosphere about them which they are evermore diffusing, an atmosphere of life or of death, which we insensibly inhale at each moral breath we draw. "The winds of the soul," as one called them of old, they fill its sails, and are continually urging it upon its course, heavenward or to hell. How immense is the difference as to the light in which we shall learn to regard a sin, according as we have been accustomed to hear it designated by a word which brings out its loathsomeness and deformity; or by one which conceals these,\* which seeks to turn the edge of the divine threatenings against it by a jest,† or worse than all, to throw a flimsy veil of sentiment over it. Thus what a source of mischief in all our country parishes is the one practice of calling a child born out of wedlock, a "love-child," instead of a bastard. It would be very hard to estimate how much it has lowered the tone and standard of morality in them; or for how many young women it may have helped to make the downward way more sloping still. How vigorously ought we to oppose ourselves to all such immoralities of language; which opposition will yet never be easy or pleasant; for many that

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\* As in Italy, during the period that poisoning was rifest, nobody was said to be poisoned; it was only that the death of some was "assisted" (*aiutata*.) This is the ever-recurring phrase in the historians of the time.

† As when in France a subtle poison by which impatient heirs sought to get rid of those who stood between them and the inheritance which they coveted was called, *poudre de succession*.

will endure to commit a sin, will resent having that sin called by its right name.\*

Coarse as, according to our present usages of language, may be esteemed the word by which our plain-speaking Anglo-Saxon fathers were wont to designate the unhappy women who make a trade of selling their bodies to the lusts of men, yet is there a profound moral sense in that word, bringing prominently out, as it does, the true villainess of their occupation, who for *hire* are content to profane and lay waste the deepest sanctities of their life. Consider the truth which is witnessed for here, as compared with the falsehood of many

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\* On the general subject of the reaction of language on the moral condition of those who use it, I will adduce in this note some Latin words of Milton, who, as he did much to enlarge, to enrich, to purify our mother tongue, so also in the Latin which he wielded so well has thus expressed himself on the moral bearing which a people's language will have on that people's life: *Neque enim qui sermo, purusne an corruptus, quæve loquendi proprietates quotidiana populo sit, parvi interesse arbitrandum est, quæ res Athenis non semel salutis fuit; immo vero, quod Platonis sententia est, immutato vestiendi more habituque graves in Republicâ motus mutationesque portendi, equidem potius collabente in vitium atque errorem loquendi usu occasum ejus urbis remque humilem et obscuram subsequi crediderim: verba enim partim inscita et putida, partim mendosa et perperam prolata, quid si ignavos et oscitantes et ad servile quidvis jam olim paratos incolarum animos haud levi indicio declarant? Contra nullum unquam audivimus imperium, nullam civitatem non mediocriter saltem floruisse, quamdiu linguæ suæ gratia, suusque cultus constitit.*

other titles by which they have been known—names which may themselves be called “whited sepulchres,” so fair are they without, yet hiding so much foul within; as for instance, that in the French language which ascribes *joy* to a life which more surely than any other dries up all the sources of joy in the heart, brings anguish, astonishment, blackest melancholy on all who have addicted themselves to it. In the same way how much more moral words are the English, “sharper,” and “blackleg,” than the French, “chevalier d’industrie:” and, coarse as it is, the same holds good of the English equivalent for the Latin “conciliatrix.” In this last word we have a notable example of the putting of bitter for sweet, of the attempt to present a disgraceful occupation on an amiable, almost a sentimental side, rather than in its own true deformity and ugliness.

Seeing then that language contains so faithful a record of the good and of the evil which in time past have been working in the minds of men, we shall not err if we regard it as a kind of moral barometer, which indicates and permanently marks the rise or fall of a nation’s life. To study a people’s language will be to study *them*, and to study them at best advantage, where they present themselves to us under fewest disguises, most nearly as they are. Too many have had a hand in it, and in causing it to arrive at its present shape, it is too entirely the work of the whole nation, the result of the united contributions of all,



to allow any successful tampering with it, any making of it to witness other than the actual facts of the case. The frivolity, the triviality of one nation or of one age will find their expression in the using of earnest words in comparatively trivial senses: the nobleness, the high moral sentiment, the contempt of aught which is base, of another, will as certainly in one way or another stamp themselves on the words which they employ; and so on with whatever good or evil they may own. Often a people's use of some single word will afford us a deeper insight into their moral condition and habits of thought than whole volumes written expressly for this end. So too the modifications of meaning which a word has undergone, as it had been transplanted from one soil to another, the way in which one nation receiving a word from another, has yet brought into it some new force which was foreign to it in the tongue from whence it was borrowed, has deepened or extenuated or otherwise altered its meaning,—all this may prove profoundly instructive, and may reveal to us, as perhaps nothing else would, the most fundamental diversities existing between them.

Observe, for instance, how different the word "self-sufficient" as used by us, and by the heathen nations of antiquity. The Greek word exactly corresponding to it is a word of honour, and applied to men in their praise. And indeed it was the glory of the heathen philosophy to teach a man to find his resources in his own bosom, to be thus sufficient for himself; and seeing that a true centre

without him and above him, a centre in God, had not been revealed to him, it was no shame for him to seek it there ; better this, such as it was, than no centre at all. But the Gospel has taught us another lesson, to find our sufficiency in God : and thus "self-sufficient," which with the Greek was a word in honourable use, is not so with us. Self-sufficiency is not a quality which any man desires now to be attributed to him. We have a feeling about the word, which causes it to carry its own condemnation with it ; and its different uses, for honour once, for reproach now, do in fact ground themselves on the central differences of heathenism and Christianity.

Once more, we might safely conclude that a nation would not be likely tamely to submit to tyranny and wrong, which had made "quarrel" out of "querela." The Latin word means properly "complaint," and we have in "querulous" this its proper meaning coming distinctly out. Not so however in "quarrel;" for the English having been wont not merely to complain, but to set vigorously about righting and redressing themselves, their griefs being also grievances, out of this word which might have given them only "querulous" and "querulousness," they have gotten "quarrel" as well.

On the other hand we cannot wonder that Italy should fill our Great Exhibition with beautiful specimens of her skill in the arts, with statues and sculptures, but should only rivet her chains the more closely by the weak and ineffectual efforts

which she makes to break them, when she can degrade the word "virtuoso," or "the virtuous," to signify one accomplished in painting, music, and sculpture, things which are the ornamental fringe of our life, but can never be made, without loss of all manliness of character, its main texture and woof—not to say that excellence in these fine arts has been in too many cases divorced from all true virtue and worth. The opposite exaggeration of the ancient dwellers in Italy, who often made "virtus" to signify warlike courage alone, as if for them all virtues were included in this one, was at all events more tolerable than this; for there is a sense in which a man's "valour" is his value.—How little the modern Italians live in the spirit of their ancient worthies, or reverence the greatest among them, we may argue from the fact, that they have been content to take the name of one among their noblest, and degrade it so far that every glib and loquacious hireling who shows strangers about their picture galleries and palaces and ruins is termed by them a "Cicerone," or a Cicero!

Very often the character and moral condition of a period is at once indicated by the new words which have risen up in that period, or by the new uses to which old words have been put. Thus Macaulay tells us that "mob" and "sham" had their birth in one of the most shameful periods of English history, that between the Restoration and Revolution. Considerably later a writer in *The Spectator* speaks of the first of these words as still only struggling into existence. "I dare not

answer," he says, "that mob, rap, pos, incog., and the like will not in time be looked at as part of our tongue. In regard of "mob," abbreviated from "mobile," the multitude which moves hither and thither, swayed by every gust of passion or caprice, this, which that writer plainly hardly expected, while he confessed it possible, has actually taken place. "It is one of the many words formerly slang, which are now used by our best writers, and received, like pardoned outlaws, into the body of respectable citizens."

So too the word "roué," which, though of French rather than of English extraction, has yet to a certain degree been naturalized among us, may be adduced, as throwing light upon a curious though a shameful page of history. It is a term applied, as we may be aware, to a man of profligate character and conduct; but properly and primarily means one "wheeled," or broken on the wheel. Now the first person who gave it its secondary meaning, was the profligate Duke of Orleans, Regent of France in the interval between the reigns of Louis the Fourteenth and Fifteenth. It was his miserable pride to collect around him companions as worthless and wicked as himself, and he called them his "roués," inasmuch as there was not one of them that did not deserve, as he was wont to boast, to be broken on the wheel, that being then in France the punishment for the worst malefactors. When we have learned the pedigree of the word, the man and the age which gave it birth rise up before us, glorying in their shame,

and no longer caring to pay even that outward hypocritical homage, which vice yields often to virtue.—We know much of the religious history of the middle ages on its least favourable side, when we know that in them “credulitas” came often to be used as a perfect equivalent for “fides,” and in fact went far to displace it. We know much of the French Revolution, when we know that it added “incivisme,” “guillotine,” and “sans-culotte,” to the French language.

And in this view how much may be learned by noting the words which nations have been obliged to borrow from other nations, as not having them of home-growth—this in general, if not in every case, testifying that the thing itself was not native, was only an exotic, transplanted, like the word which indicated it, from a foreign soil. Thus it is singularly characteristic of the social and political life of England, as distinguished from that of the other European nations, that to it alone the word “club” belongs; that the French and German languages have been alike unable to grow a word of their own as its equivalent, and have both been obliged to borrow this from us. And no wonder; for these voluntary associations of men for the furthering of such social or political ends as are near to the hearts of the associates could have only had their rise under such favourable circumstances as ours. In no country where there was not extreme personal freedom could they have sprung up; and as little in any where men did not know how to use this freedom with moderation and self-restraint,

could they long have been endured. It was comparatively easy to adopt the word; but the ill success of the "club" itself everywhere save here where it is native, has shown that it was not so easy to transplant the thing. While we have lent this and other words, mostly political, to the French and to the German, it would not be less instructive, were this a suitable opportunity, to trace our corresponding obligations to them.

But I must bring this lecture to an end. These illustrations, to which it would not be hard to add many more, are amply enough to justify what I have asserted of the existence of a moral element in words; enough to make us feel about them, that they do not hold themselves neutral in the great conflict between good and evil, light and darkness, which is dividing the world; that they are not contented to be the passive vehicles, now of the truth, and now of falsehood. We see on the contrary that they continually take their side, are some of them children of light, others children of this world; they beat with the pulses of our life; they stir with our passions; they receive from us the impressions of our good and of our evil, which again they are active further to propagate amongst us. Must we not own then that there is a wondrous and mysterious world, of which we may hitherto have taken too little account, around us and about us? and may there not be a deeper meaning than hitherto we have attached to it lying in that solemn declaration, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned"?

## LECTURE III.

## ON THE HISTORY IN WORDS.

IT might at first sight appear as if language, apart that is from literature and books, and where these did not exist, was the frailest, the most untrustworthy, of all the vehicles of knowledge, and that most likely to betray its charge: yet is it in fact the great, oftentimes the only, connecting link between the present and the remotest past, an ark riding above waterfloods that have swept away every other landmark and memorial of ages and generations. Far beyond all written records in a language, the language itself stretches back and offers itself for our investigation—"the pedigree of nations," as Johnson calls it—itself a far more ancient monument and document than any writing which it contains. These records, moreover, may have been falsified by carelessness, by vanity, by fraud, by a multitude of causes; but *it* is never false, never deceives us, if we know how to question it aright.

And this questioning of it will often lead to conclusions of extreme importance. Thus there have been those who have denied on one ground or another the accuracy of the statement made by Scripture that the whole earth was peopled from a single pair; who have sought to prove that there must have been many beginnings, many

centres. In answer to them, the *physical* unity of the race of mankind has been triumphantly shown by Dr. Prichard and others ; but all recent investigations plainly announce that a yet stronger evidence, and a moral argument more convincing still, for the unity of mankind will be found in the proofs which are daily accumulating of the tendency of all languages, however widely they may differ now, to refer themselves to a common stock and single fountain head. Of course *we* need not these proofs, who believe the fact, because it is written ; yet can we only rejoice at each new homage which Science pays to revealed Truth, being sure that at the last she will stand in her service altogether.

Such investigations as these however lie plainly out of your sphere. Not so, however, those humbler, yet not less interesting, inquiries, which by the aid of any tolerable dictionary you may carry on into the past history of your own land, as borne witness to by the present language of its people, on which the marks and vestiges of great revolutions are visibly and profoundly impressed, never again to be obliterated from it. You know how the geologist is able from the different strata and deposits, primary, secondary, or tertiary, succeeding one another, which he meets, to conclude the successive physical changes through which a region has past ; is in a condition to preside at those changes, to measure the forces which were at work to produce them, and almost to indicate their date. Now with such a composite language as the English before us, we may carry on moral and historical



researches precisely analogous to his. Here too are strata and deposits, not of gravel and chalk, sandstone and limestone, but of Celtic, Latin, Saxon, Danish, Norman, and then again Latin and French words, with slighter intrusions from other sources : and any one with skill to analyze the language might re-create for himself the history of the people speaking that language, might come to appreciate the divers elements out of which that people was composed, in what proportion these were mingled, and in what succession they followed one upon the other.

Take for example the relation in which the Saxon and Norman occupants of this land stood to one another. I doubt not that an account of this, in the main as accurate as it would be certainly instructive, might be drawn from an intelligent study of the contributions which they have severally made to the English language, as bequeathed to us jointly by them both. Supposing all other records to have perished, we might still work out and almost reconstitute the history by these aids ; even as now, when so many documents, so many institutions survive, this must still be accounted the most important, and that of which the study will introduce us, as no other can, into the innermost heart and life of great periods of our history. Nor indeed is it hard to see why the language must contain such instruction as this, when we a little realize to ourselves the stages by which it has come down to us in its present shape. There was a time when the languages which the Saxon

and the Norman severally spoke, existed each by the side of, but unmingled with, the other; one, that of the small dominant class, the other that of the great body of the people. By degrees, however, with the fusion of the two races, the two languages also fused into a third. At once there would exist duplicates for many things. But as in popular speech two words will not long exist side by side to designate the same thing, it became a question how the relative claims of the Saxon and Norman word should adjust themselves, which should remain, which should be dropped; or, if not dropped, should be transferred to some other object, or express some other relation. It is not of course meant that this was ever formally proposed, or as something to be settled by agreement; but practically, one was to be taken, one left. Which was it that should maintain its ground? Evidently, where a word was often on the lips of one race, its equivalent seldom on those of the other, where it intimately cohered with the manner of life of one, was only remotely in contact with that of the other, where it laid strong hold on one, but slight on the other, the issue could not be doubtful. In several cases the matter was simpler still: it was not that one word expelled the other, or that rival claims had to be adjusted; but there never had existed more than one word, the thing having been quite strange to the other section of the nation.

Here is the explanation of the assertion just now made—namely, that we might almost reconstruct our history, so far as it turned upon the

Norman conquest, by an analysis of our present language, a mustering of its words in groups, and a close observation of the nature and character of those which the two races have severally contributed to it. Thus we should confidently conclude that the Norman was the ruling race, from the noticeable fact that all the words of dignity, state, honour, and pre-eminence, with one remarkable exception, (to be adduced presently,) descend to us from them—sovereign, sceptre, throne, realm, royalty, homage, prince, duke, count, (“earl” indeed is Scandinavian, though he must borrow his “countess” from the Norman,) chancellor, treasurer, palace, castle, hall, dome, and a multitude more. At the same time the one remarkable exception of “king” would make us, even did we know nothing of the actual facts, suspect that the chieftain of this ruling race came in not upon a new title, not as overthrowing a former dynasty, but claiming to be in the rightful line of its succession; that the true continuity of the nation had not, in fact any more than in word, been entirely broken, but survived, in due time to assert itself anew.

And yet, while the statelier superstructure of the language, almost all articles of luxury, all that has to do with the chase, with chivalry, with personal adornment, is Norman throughout; with the broad basis of the language, and therefore of the life, it is otherwise. The great features of nature, the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the water, the fire, all the prime social relations, father, mother, husband, wife, son, daughter, these

are Saxon. The palace and the castle may have come to us from the Norman, but to the Saxon we owe far dearer names, the home, the hearth, the house, the roof. His "board," and often probably it was no more, has a more hospitable sound than the other's "table." His sturdy arms turn the soil; he is the boor, the hind, the churl; or if his Norman master has a name for him, it is one which on his lips becomes more and more a title of opprobrium and contempt, the villain. The instruments used in cultivating the earth, the flail, plough, sickle, spade, are expressed in his language; so too the main products of the earth, as wheat, rye, oats, bere, i. e. barley; and no less the names of domestic animals. Concerning these last it is not a little characteristic to observe, and Walter Scott has put the observation into the mouth of the Saxon swineherd in *Ivanhoe*, that the names of almost all, so long as they are alive, are thus Saxon, but when dressed and prepared for food become Norman—a fact indeed which we might have expected beforehand; for the Saxon hind had the charge and labour of tending and feeding them, but only that they might appear on the table of his Norman lord. Thus ox, steer, cow are Saxon, but beef Norman; calf is Saxon, but veal Norman; sheep is Saxon, but mutton Norman; so it is severally with swine and pork, deer and venison, fowl and pullet. Bacon, the only flesh which may ever have come within his reach, is the single exception.

Putting all this together, with much more of the

same kind, which might be produced, but has only been indicated here, we should certainly gather, that while there are manifest tokens as preserved in our language, of the Saxon having been for a season an inferior and even an oppressed race, the stable elements of Saxon life, however overlaid for a while, had still made good their claim to be the solid groundwork of the after nation as of the after language; and to the justice of this conclusion all other historic records, and the present social condition of England, consent in bearing testimony.

What I have here supposed might be done in the way of reproducing the past history of England, had all records of her earlier times, and of the great social changes of those times been entirely swept away, this has been done for the earlier history of Italy, of which the written memorials *have* thus perished, by a great modern historian of Rome. He draws most important conclusions respecting the races which occupied the Italian soil, and the relations in which they stood to one another, from an analysis of the words which in the Latin language are derived severally from a Greek and from other sources. "It cannot," he says, "be mere chance that the words for house, field, plough, ploughing, wine, oil, milk, kine, swine, and others relating to tillage and gentler ways of life agree in Latin and in Greek, while all objects appertaining to war or the chase are designated by words utterly ungreecian." From hence he draws the conclusion that this ungreecian population which

has bequeathed these latter words stood toward the Grecian very much in the same relation which we have seen the Norman, as declared by the consenting witness of history and language, to have occupied in respect of the Saxon.

Thus far our lesson has been derived from a noting of the relative proportions in which the words of one stock and of another are mingled in a language, with the domains of human activity to which these words severally appertain. But this is not all ; there are vast harvests of historic lore garnered often in single words ; there are continually great facts of history which they at once declare and preserve. We cannot begin the series of our instances in proof better than with a sacred example, one which shews us the Holy Spirit Himself counting a name and the rise of a name of such importance as to make it matter of special record in the Book of Life. "The disciples were called *Christians* first in Antioch." (Acts xi. 26.) This might seem at first sight a notice curious and interesting, as all must possess interest for us which relates to the early days of the Church, but nothing more. And yet in truth how much of history is enfolded in this name ; what light it throws on the early history of Christianity to know when and where it was first imposed on the faithful—"imposed," I say, for it is clearly a name which they did not give to themselves, but received from their adversaries, however afterwards they may have learned to accept it as a title of glory

and honour. For it is not said that they "*called themselves*," but "*were called*" Christians first at Antioch ; and we do not find the name anywhere in Scripture except on the lips of those alien from, or opposed to, the Gospel. (Acts xxvi. 28 ; 1 Pet. iv. 16.) And as it was a name imposed by the adversaries, so among those adversaries it was plainly the heathen, and not the Jews, that gave it ; since the Jews would never have called the followers of Jesus of Nazareth "Christians," or "those of Christ," seeing that the very point of their opposition to Him was that He was not the Christ, but a false pretender to this name.

Starting then from this point, that "Christians" was a name given to the disciples of the Lord by the heathen, let us see what we may learn from it. Now we know that Antioch was the head-quarters of the earliest missions to the heathen, even as Jerusalem was to those of the seed of Abraham. It was there and among the faithful there that the sense of the world-wide destination of the Gospel arose ; there it was first plainly seen as intended for all kindreds of the earth. Hitherto the faithful in Christ had been called by their enemies, and indeed often were still called, "Galileans," or "Nazarenes"—both names which indicated the Jewish cradle in which the Gospel had been nursed, and that the world saw in it no more than a Jewish sect. But the name, "Christians," or "those of Christ," imposed upon them now, while it indicated that Christ and the confession of his name was felt even by the world to be the sum and

centre of their religion, showed also that the world had now come to comprehend, I do not say what the Church would be, but what it claimed to be,—no mere variety of Judaism, but a society with a world-wide mission; it is clear that, when this name was given, the Church, even in the eyes of the world, had chipped its Jewish shell. Nor will the attentive reader fail to observe that the imposing of this name on believers is by closest juxtaposition connected in the sacred narrative, and still more closely in the Greek than in the English, with St. Paul's first arrival at Antioch and preaching there; he being the especial and appointed instrument for bringing the Church into the recognition of this its destination for all men. As so often happens with the rise of a new name, the rise of this one marked a new epoch in the Church's life, its entrance upon a new stage of its development.

It is a merely subordinate matter, but yet I might just observe how strikingly what we know from other quarters confirms the accuracy of this account, which lays the invention of this name to the credit of the Antiochenes. Antioch, with its idle and witty inhabitants, was famous in all antiquity for the invention of nicknames. It was a manufacture in which it particularly excelled: and thus it was exactly the place, where beforehand we might have expected that such a name, being a nickname or little better in the mouths of those that devised it, should have sprung up.

As another example of the manner in which history is laid up in words, we may take the word



“Church.” There can, I think, be no reasonable doubt that this word is originally from the Greek, and signifies, that which pertains to the Lord, the house which is the Lord’s. But here a difficulty meets us. How explain the presence of a Greek word in the vocabulary of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers? for that *we* derive the word mediately from them, and not immediately from the Greek, is certain. What contact, direct or indirect, was there between the languages to account for this? The explanation is curious. While the Anglo-Saxons and other tribes of the Teutonic stock were *almost* universally converted by their contact with the Latin Church in the western provinces of the Roman Empire, or by its missionaries, yet it came to pass that before this, some of the Goths on the lower Danube had been brought to the knowledge of Christ by Greek missionaries from Constantinople; and this word *κυριακή* or “Church” did, with certain others, pass over from the Greek to the Gothic tongue; and these Goths, the first converted to the Christian faith, the first therefore that had a Christian vocabulary, lent the word in their turn to the other German tribes, among others to our Anglo-Saxon forefathers; thus it has come round by the Goths from Constantinople to us.

Or again, examine the words “pagan” and “paganism,” and you will find that there is history in them. Many of us no doubt are aware that the word “pagani,” derived from “pagus,” a village, signifies properly the dwellers in hamlets and villages, as distinguished from the inhabitants of

towns and cities; and the word was so used, and without any religious significance, in the earlier periods of the Latin language. But how came it first to be employed as equivalent to "heathen," to be applied to those yet alien from the faith of Christ? It was in this way. The Christian Church fixed itself first in the seats and centres of intelligence, in the towns and cities of the Roman Empire, and in them its first triumphs were won; while long after these had accepted the truth, heathen superstitions and idolatries languished and lingered on in the obscure hamlets and villages of the country; so that "pagans," or villagers, came to be applied to the remaining votaries of the old and decaying superstitions, inasmuch as far the greater number of them were of this class. The first document in which the word is used in this its secondary sense is of date A.D. 368. Here then we have two instructive notices in this word—first, the historic fact that the Church of Christ did thus plant itself first in the haunts of learning and intelligence; and then the more important moral fact, that it shunned not discussion, that it feared not to grapple with the wit and wisdom of this world, or to expose its claims to the searching examination of educated men; but, on the contrary, had its claims first recognised by them, and in the great cities of the world won first a complete triumph over all opposing powers.

These examples which I have just adduced, can hardly fail to interest us as Christians and as members of the Church; let us now take one which

must interest us as Englishmen,—“Anglia,” or “England.” When and under what circumstances did this island exchange for this its earlier name of Britain, which it had borne for more than a thousand years? There seems no sufficient reason for calling in question, though some have so done, the statement of the old chronicler that it received this new name of Anglia from Egbert, king of Wessex, who with the sanction of his Parliament or Witane-gemot, holden A.D. 800 in this very city of Winchester, determined that the name Britain should give place to England. It may be that the change was not effected by any such formal act as this, yet the accuracy of the old historian, so far at least as his date is concerned, receives strong confirmation from the circumstance that “Anglia,” which is nowhere to be traced in any documents anterior to this period, does immediately after begin to appear.

What lessons for the student of English history are here, in the knowledge of this one fact, if he will but seek to look at it all round, and consider it in a thoughtful spirit. I have said that the rise of a new name marks often a new epoch in history; certainly it was so in the instance before us. In the first place, as it is the just law of names, that a people should give a name to the land which they possess, not receive one from it, as for example the Franks make Gaul to be France, do not suffer themselves to become Gauls, so as regards our own land, it is plain from the coming up of this name that there must have been now a sense in men’s minds that its transformation from a land of Britons to a

land of Angles was at length completely accomplished, and might therefore justly claim to find its recognition in a word. That the Normans never made a "Norman-land" out of England, as they had out of Neustria, and as the Angles had made an "Angle-land" out of Britain,—that they never so supplanted the population or dissolved the social frame-work of the Angles, as these had done of the Britons,—is evident from the fact that there went along with *their* conquest of the land no such substitution of a new name for the old, no such obliteration of the old by the new, as on that prior occupation of the soil had found place.—And then further, how significant a fact, that the invading German tribes, which had hitherto been content to call themselves according to the different provinces or districts which they occupied, should have now felt that they needed, and out of that need should have given birth to, a name common to and including the whole land. Was there not here a sign that the sense of unity, of all making up one corporate body, one nation, was emerging out of the confusion of the preceding period of the Heptarchy? We know from other sources that Egbert was the first who united the different kingdoms of the Heptarchy under his single sceptre; the first in whom the nation was knit together into one. How instructive to find a name, which should be the symbol of unity, coming to the birth at this very moment. In respect too of the relations between themselves of the two most important tribes which had settled in this island, the Angles and the Saxons, (the Jutes

were too few to contend for the honour) it is assuredly a weighty fact, that it was the Angles alone, from whom, though numerically inferior, the new appellation was derived. Doubtless, a moral or political predominance of this tribe, probably a political founded on a moral, asserted itself in this fact. We are the less inclined to attribute it to accident from the circumstance that in the phrase "Anglo-Saxons" (*Angli Saxones*), a term which is no modern invention of convenience, as is sometimes erroneously asserted, but is of earlier use even than *Anglia*, the Angles have again the precedence, and the Saxons only follow.

Once more, the words "saunter" and "saunterer" are singular records of mediæval practices and feelings. "Saunterer," derived from "*la sainte terre*," is one who visits the Holy Land. At first a deep and earnest conviction drew men thither, drew them to visit,—in the beautiful words which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Henry the Fourth, and which explain so well the attractions that at one time made it the magnet of all Christendom,—to visit, I say,

" those holy fields,  
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet,  
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed  
For our advantage on the bitter cross."

By degrees, however, the making of this pilgrimage degenerated into a mere worldly fashion, and every idle person that liked strolling about better than performing the duties of his calling,

assumed the pilgrim's staff, and proclaimed himself bound for the Holy Land ; to which very often he never in earnest set out. And thus this word forfeited the more honourable meaning it may once have possessed, and the "saunterer" came to signify one idly and unprofitably wasting his time, loitering here and there, with no fixed purpose or aim.

To the Crusades also probably, and to the intense hatred which they roused throughout Christendom against the Mahometan infidels, we owe the use of the word "miscreant," in its present sense of one to whom we would attribute the vilest principles and practice. It meant at the first no more than "misbeliever," and would have been used with as little sense of injustice, of the royal-hearted Saladin as of the most infamous wretch that fought in his armies ; but by degrees those who employed it put more and more of their feeling and passion into it, and more and more lost sight of its etymology, until they would apply it to any whom they regarded with feelings of abhorrence resembling those which they entertained for an infidel. Yet was there a certain right instinct at work in them who transferred the word from those who believed wrongly to those who lived wrongly. It was felt that a right faith and a right life were not independent of one another. The word "assassin" also, the explanation of which however we must be content to leave, belongs to a romantic chapter in the history of the Crusades.

A curious piece of history is wrapped up in the

word "poltroon," supposing it to be indeed derived, as many excellent etymologists have considered, from the Latin "pollice truncus;" one, that is, deprived, or who has deprived himself, of his thumb. We know that in the old times a self-mutilation of this description was not unfrequent on the part of some cowardly shirking fellow, who wished to escape his share in the defence of his country; he would cut off his right thumb, and at once become incapable of drawing the bow, and thus useless for the wars. It was not to be wondered at that Englishmen, the men of Crecy and of Agincourt, who with those very bows which he had disabled himself from drawing, had quelled the mailed chivalry of Europe, should have looked with extremest disdain on one who had so basely exempted himself from service, nor that the "pollice truncus," the poltroon, first applied to a coward of this sort, should afterwards become a name of scorn affixed to every base and cowardly evader of the duties and dangers of life.\* Our use of the word "caitiff," which is identical with "captive," only coming through the Norman French, has, in like manner, its rise out of the sense that he who

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\* In Bonaparte's wars exactly the same thing happened, and young men cut off not now the thumb, but the forefinger, that which should pull the trigger, so to escape being drawn for the conscription; and travellers in Egypt tell us that under the horrible tyranny of Mehemet Ali, a great part of the population in some of the villages had deprived themselves of the sight of the right eye, that in like manner they might be useless for war.

lets himself be made prisoner in war is a worthless, good-for-nothing person—a feeling so strong in some states of antiquity, that under no circumstances would they consent to ransom those of their citizens who had fallen alive into the hands of the enemy. The “captives” were accounted “caitiffs,” whom they could better do without. The same feeling has given us “craven,” another word for coward: the “craven” is he who has *craved* or *craven* his life at the enemies’ hands, instead of resisting to the death.

There is a little word not in uncommon use among us, an inquiry into the pedigree of which will lay open to us an important page in the intellectual history of the world. We may all know what a “dunce” is, but we may not be as well acquainted with the quarter from whence the word has been derived. Certain theologians in the middle ages were termed Schoolmen; being so called because they were formed in the cloister and cathedral schools which Charlemagne had founded—men not to be lightly spoken of, as now they often are by those who never read a line of their works, and have not a tithe of their wit. But at the revival of learning their works fell out of favour: they were not written in classical Latin: the form in which their speculations were thrown was often unattractive; it was mainly in their authority that the Romish Church found support for many of its perilled dogmas; on all which accounts, it was considered a mark of intellectual progress and advance to have broken with them and altogether



thrown off their yoke. Some, however, still clung to these Schoolmen, and to one in particular, *Duns Scotus*, the great teacher of the Franciscan order ; and many times an adherent of the old learning would seek to strengthen his position by an appeal to its great doctor, familiarly called *Duns* ; while those who had rejected his authority would contemptuously rejoin, " Oh, you are a *Dunsman*," or more briefly, " You are a *Duns*,"—or, " This is a piece of *dunsery* ;" and inasmuch as the new learning was ever enlisting more and more of the genius and scholarship of the age on its side, the title became more and more a term of scorn ; " Remember ye not," says Tyndal, " how within this thirty years and far less, the old barking curs, *Dunce's* disciples, and like draff called Scotists, the children of darkness, raged in every pulpit against Greek, Latin, and Hebrew ?" And thus from that long extinct conflict between the old and the new learning, that strife between the mediæval and the modern theology, we inherit the words, " *Dunce*," and " *duncery*." Let us pause here for a moment to confess that the lot of poor *Duns* in this was certainly a hard one, who, whatever may have been his merits as a teacher of Christian truth, was certainly one of the keenest and most subtle-witted of men. He, the " subtle" Doctor, (Doctor subtilis,) as his admirers called him, could hardly have anticipated, and as little as any man deserved, that his name should be turned into a by-word expressive of stupidity and obstinate dulness. This, however, is only one example of

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the curious fortune of words. We have another singular example of the same, and of a parallel injustice, in the word "mammetry," or Mahometry. Mahometanism being the most prominent form of false religion with which Englishmen were acquainted, this word in our early English, and indeed beyond the Reformation, was used to express first any false religion, and then the worship of idols; idolatry being proper to, and a leading feature of, most false religions. In fact, however, Mahometanism is the great exception, its most characteristic feature, and that which makes its glory, being its protest against all idol worship whatsoever, so that the injustice was signal in calling an idol a "mammet," that is, a Mahomet, and idolatry "mammetry."

Another word, of which I have never seen the true derivation in any English dictionary, although probably a good Spanish would supply it, is "tariff," nor is it unworthy to be traced. We all know the meaning of the word, that it signifies a fixed scale of duties, levied upon imports. If you turn to a map of Spain, you will observe at its southern point, and running out into the Straits of Gibraltar, a promontory, which from its position is admirably adapted for commanding the entrance of the Mediterranean Sea, and watching the exit and entrance of all ships. A fortress stands upon this promontory, called now, as it was also called in the times of the Moorish domination in Spain, "Tarifa;" the name indeed is of Moorish origin. It was the custom of the Moors to watch from this point all merchant ships

going into, or coming out of, the Midland Sea; and issuing from this stronghold, to levy a certain fixed scale of duty on all merchandize passing in and out of the Straits, and this was called from the place where it was levied, "tarifa" or "tariff;" and in this way we have acquired the word.

Having dedicated this lecture to the history which is in words, I can have no fitter opportunity of urging upon you the importance of seeking in every case to acquaint yourselves with the circumstances under which any body of men, that have played an important part in history, especially in the history of your own land, obtained the name by which they were afterwards willing to be known, or which was used for their designation by others. This you may do as a matter of historical inquiry, and keeping entirely aloof in spirit from the scorn, the falsehood, the bitterness, the calumny, out of which very often this name was first imposed. Whatever of this evil may have been at work in them that coined, or gave currency to, the name, the name itself can never be neglected without serious loss by those who would truly understand the moral significance of the thing; there is always something, often very much, to be learned from it. Learn then in regard of each one of these names which you may meet in your studies, whether it was one which men gave to themselves; or one imposed on them by others, and which they never recognised; or one which being first imposed by others, was yet in course of time admitted and accepted by themselves, as that name of "Christian"

to which we just now alluded. We have examples in all these kinds. Thus the "Gnostics" called *themselves* such ; it was a name of their own devising, and in which they boasted : in like manner the "Cavaliers" in our Civil War. "Quaker," "Puritan," "Roundhead" were all, on the contrary, names devised by others, and never accepted by them on whom they were fastened ; while "Whig" and "Tory" were nicknames originally indeed of bitterest scorn and party hate, given by two political bodies in England to one another, which however in course of years lost what was offensive in them, until they came to be accepted and employed by the very parties themselves. The same we may say of "Methodist;" it was certainly not first taken by the followers of Wesley, but put on them by others, while yet they have been subsequently willing to accept and to be known by it.

Now of these titles and many more that might be adduced, some undoubtedly had their rise in mere external accident, and stand in no essential connexion with those that bear them. If "Roundhead," for instance, originated in Queen Henrietta's asking at Lord Strafford's trial, concerning Pym, "Who is that *round-headed* man?"\* it would be exactly such a one ; and these, although not without their instruction, yet plainly are not so instructive as other names, in which the innermost heart of a system speaks out and reveals itself, so that, having mastered the name, we have placed ourselves at the central point, and that from which

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\* *Baxter's Life and Times*, p. 34.

we shall best master everything besides. Thus for instance is it with "Gnosticism" and "Gnostic;" in the prominence given to *gnosis*, or knowledge, as opposed to faith, lies the key to the whole system. And I may say generally that almost all the sects and parties, religious and political, which have risen up in times past in England, are known by names that will repay study; an entering into which will bring us far in the understanding of their strength and their weakness, their truth and their error, the idea and intention according to which they wrought. Puritans, Latitudinarians, Fifth Monarchy Men, Seekers, Independents, Friends, these titles with many more have each its significance; and would you understand them, you must first understand what they were called. From this must be your point of starting, even as to this you must bring back whatever later information you may gain; and, though I will not say that you must always subordinate it to the name, yet must you ever put it in relation and connexion with that.

You will often be able to glean knowledge from the names of things, if not as important as that I have just been speaking of, yet curious and interesting. What a record of inventions lies in the names which so many articles bear, of the place from which they first came, or the person by whom they were first invented. The "bayonet" tells us that it was first made at Bayonne—"cambrics" that they came from Cambray—"damask" from Damascus—"arras" from the city of the same name—"cordwain" from Cordova—"currants" from Corinth—the "guinea," that it was originally coined

out of gold brought from the African coast so called. Such indeed is the manufacturing progress of England that we now send our calicoes and muslins to India and the East ; yet the words give standing witness that we once imported them from thence ; for " calico " is from Calicut, and " muslin " from Moussul, a city in Asiatic Turkey.

It is true indeed that occasionally the names embody and give permanence to an error ; as when in the name " America " the honour of discovering the New World, which belonged to Columbus, has been transferred to another eminent discoverer, but to one who had no title to this praise, and who did not, as has been lately abundantly shown, by any means desire to claim it for himself. So too the " turkey " in our farm-yards seems to say of itself that it came from the region of the same name ; and the assumption that it did no doubt caused it to be so called ; while indeed it was unknown in Europe until introduced from the New World, where alone it is indigenous. In like manner the name " gypsies " appears to imply that Egypt was the country to which these wanderers originally belonged, and from which they had migrated westward ; and certainly it was so believed in Europe at their first appearance in the beginning of the fifteenth century, and hence their title of " gypsies," or Egyptians. It is now however clearly made out that they are an outcast tribe, which has wandered hither from a more distant land, from India itself.

And where words have not, as in these cases, embodied an error, it will yet sometimes happen

that the sound or spelling of a word will to us possibly suggest a wrong explanation, against which in these studies it will need to be on our guard. I dare say that there has been a stage in most boys' geographical knowledge, when they have taken for granted that Jutland was so called, not because it was the land of the Jutes, but on account of its *jutting* out into the sea in so remarkable a manner. And there have not been wanting those who have ventured to trace in the name "Jove" a heathen reminiscence of the awful name of Jehovah. I will not enter into this here; sufficient to say that, however specious this at first sight may seem, yet on closer examination of the two words, every connexion between them disappears.

Sometimes the assumed derivation has reacted upon and modified the spelling. Thus the name of the Caledonian tribe whom we call the Picts, would probably have come down to us in a somewhat different form, but for the assumption which early rose up, that they were so called from their custom of staining or painting their bodies, that in fact "Picts" meant "the painted." This, as is now acknowledged, is an exceedingly improbable supposition. It would be quite conceivable that the Romans should have given this name to the *first* barbarous tribe they encountered, who were in the habit of painting themselves thus; such a custom, forcing itself on the eye, and impressing itself on the imagination, is exactly that which gives birth to a name: but after they had been long familiar with the tribes in southern Britain, to whom this

painting or tattooing was equally familiar, it is quite inconceivable that they should have applied it to one of the northern tribes in the island, with which they first came in contact at a far later day. The name is much more probably the original Celtic one belonging to the tribe, slightly altered in the mouths of the Romans.—It may have been the same with “hurricane;” for many have imagined that this word, being used especially to signify the West Indian tornado, must be derived from the tearing up and *hurrying* away of the *canes* in the sugar plantations, just in the same way as the Latin “*calamitas*” has been drawn, but erroneously, from “*calamus*,” the stalk of the corn. In both cases the etymology is faulty; “hurricane” is only a transplanting into our tongue of the Spanish “huracan,” or the French “ouragan.”\*

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\* One or two words more I will mention here, in which a falsely imagined etymology has certainly gone so far as often, if not always, to influence the spelling. How could the *h*, for example, have ever found its way into “posthumous,” but for the erroneous assumption that it had something to do with *post humum*, instead of being the superlative of “*posterus*”? “Surname,” too, is spelt by many with an *i*, as if it were “sire”-name, the family name in contradistinction to the personal or Christian, when indeed it is the name over and above (“sur” for “supra,”) as I shall have occasion to touch on in a later lecture. “Shamefaced” too was once “shamefast,” “shamefacedness” “shamefastness,” like steadfast and steadfastness: but the ordinary manifestations of shame being by the face, have brought it to its present orthography; it was shamefastness at 1 Tim. ii. 9, in the first edition (1611) of the authorized Version.



It is a signal evidence of the conservative powers of language, that we may oftentimes trace in speech, and in speech only, surviving records of customs and states of society which have now past wholly away, of theories which have long since been utterly renounced, of superstitions which have vanished altogether in the brighter day. For example, a "stipulation," or agreement, is so called, as many are strong to affirm, from "stipula," a straw, because in old sales when one person passed over landed property to another, a straw from the land, as a pledge or representative of the property transferred, was handed from the seller to the buyer, and was commonly preserved with, or inserted in, the title deeds. And we all know how important a fact of English history is laid up in "curfew," or "couvre-feu." Nor need I do more than remind you that in our common phrase of "signing our name," we preserve a record of a time when the first rudiments of education, such as the power of writing, were the portion of so few, that it was not the exception as now, but the custom for most persons to make their mark or "sign," great barons and kings themselves not being ashamed to set this sign or cross to the weightiest documents. The more accurate language by which to express what now we do, would be to speak of "subscribing the name." Then too, whenever we speak of arithmetic as the science of "calculation," we in fact allude to that rudimental period of the science of numbers, when pebbles (*calculi*) were used, as now among savages they often are, to

facilitate the practice of counting. In "library" we preserve a record of the fact that books were once written on the bark (*liber*) of trees, as in "paper" of a somewhat later period, when the Egyptian papyrus, "the paper reeds by the brooks" as Isaiah calls them, furnished the chief material employed in writing.

The words "humorous," "good humour," "bad humour," and the like, rest altogether on a now exploded, but a very old and widely extended, theory of medicine; according to which there were four principal moistures or "humours" in the natural body, on the due proportion and combination of which the disposition alike of body and of mind depended. And "temper," as used by us now, has its origin in the same theory; the due admixture or right "tempering" of these gave what was called the happy "temper," which, thus existing inwardly, manifested itself also outwardly. In the same manner "distemper," which we still employ in the sense of sickness, was that evil frame either of a man's body or of his mind, (for it was used alike of both,) which had its rise in an unsuitable mingling of these humours. In these instances, as in many more, the great streams of thought and feeling have changed their course, and now flow in quite other channels from those which once they filled, but have left these words as lasting memorials of the channels in which once they ran.

Other singular examples we have of the way in which the record of old errors, exploded long ago, may yet survive in language,—the words

that grew into use when those errors found credit, maintaining still their currency among us. Thus no one now believes in astrology, that the planet under which a man may happen to be born will affect his temperament, will make him for life of a disposition grave or gay, lively or severe. Yet we seem to affirm as much in language, for we speak of a person as "jovial," or "saturnine," or "mercurial"—"jovial," as being born under the planet Jupiter or Jove, which was the joyfullest star, and of the happiest augury of all: a gloomy severe person is said to be "saturnine," as born under the planet Saturn, who was considered to make those that owned his influence, and were born when he was in the ascendant, grave and stern as himself; another we call "mercurial," light-hearted, as those born under the planet Mercury were accounted to be. The same sense of the influence of the stars, not over persons, but events, survives in "disaster," and "disastrous," (from *dis astrum*,) "evil-starred."

But here a question presents itself, one which might at first sight seem merely speculative, yet which is not altogether so; for it has before now become a veritable case of conscience with some whether they ought to use words which originally rested on, and so seem to affirm, some superstition or idolatry. This question has practically settled itself; they will keep their ground; but they also ought. It is no necessity that a word should always be considered to root itself in its etymology, and to draw its life-blood from thence. It may so detach itself from this as to have a right to be regarded

independently of it. Thus it was a piece of ethical prudery, and an ignorance of the laws which govern the formation and use of words, in the early Quakers, when they refused to employ the names commonly given to the days of the week, and substituted for these, "first day," "second day," and so on ; and this, on the ground that it became not Christian men to give so much sanction to idolatry as was involved in Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday—as though every time they spoke of Wednesday they would be doing some honour to Woden, of Thursday to Thor, of Friday to Freya, and thus with the rest. But these names of the days of the week had long left their etymologies behind, and quite disengaged themselves from them. Nor, had these precisians in speech been consistent, could they have stopped where they did ; every new acquaintance with the derivation or primary use of words would have brought them into new embarrassment, would have required them still further to purge their speech. "To charm," "to fascinate," "to enchant," would have been no longer lawful words for those who had outlived the belief in magic ; nor "lunacy" nor "lunatic" for such as did not believe that the moon had anything to do with mental unsoundness. Nay, they would have had to find fault with the language of Holy Scripture itself ; for in the New Testament there is a word in very honourable use, expressing a function to be exercised by the faithful, the function of an interpreter, which word is yet directly derived from Hermes, an heathen deity ; nor did he, like

Woden, Freya and those others, pertain to a long extinct mythology, but to one existing at that very moment in its strength. And how was it, we may ask, that Paul did not protest against a Christian woman retaining the name of Phebe, (Rom. xvi. 1,) a goddess of the same mythology?

I will conclude this lecture by a comparison, and one which I trust what has been said will abundantly justify. Suppose the pieces of money, which in the ordinary intercourse of life are passing through our hands, had each one something of its own which made it more or less worthy of note; if on one was stamped some striking maxim, on another some important fact, on a third a memorable date; if others were works of finest art, graven with rare and beautiful devices, or bearing the head of some ancient sage, or heroic king; if others again were the sole surviving monuments of mighty nations that once filled the world with their fame; what a careless indifference to our own improvement would it argue in us, if we were content that these should come and go, without our vouchsafing them so much as one serious regard. Such a currency there is, a currency intellectual and spiritual of no meaner worth, and one with which we have to transact so much of the higher business of our lives. Let us see that we come not here under the condemnation of any such incurious dulness as that which I have imagined.

## LECTURE IV.

## ON THE DISTINCTION OF WORDS.

IN the first of my lectures here, I expressed my intention of considering, during their course, the advantages which might be derived from the study of the *distinction* of words. It is to this, to the subject of synonyms and their distinction, that I propose to devote the present. What, it may be asked, do we mean, when, comparing certain words with one another, we affirm of them that they are synonyms? We mean that they are words which, with great and essential resemblances of meaning, have at the same time small, subordinate, and partial differences—these differences being such as either originally, and on the ground of their etymology, inhered in them; or differences which they have acquired in the eyes of all by use; or which, though nearly latent now, they are capable of receiving at the hands of wise and discreet masters of the tongue. Synonyms are words of like significance in the main, but with a certain unlikeness as well.

So soon as the term is defined thus, it will be at once perceived by any acquainted with the derivation, that strictly speaking, it is a misnomer, and is given to these words with a certain inaccuracy and impropriety; since, according to strict etymo-

logy the terms "synonyms," or "synonymous," applied to words, would affirm of them that they covered not merely almost the same extent of meaning, but altogether and exactly the same, that they were in their signification perfectly identical and coincident. The terms, however, are not ordinarily so used, and plainly are not so, when it is undertaken to trace out the distinction between synonyms; for, without denying that there are such absolutely coincident words, such perfect synonyms, yet these could not be the object of any such discrimination; since where there was no real distinction, it would be lost labour and the exercise of a perverse ingenuity to attempt to draw one. Synonyms then, as the word is generally understood, and as I shall use it here, are words with slighter differences already existing between them, or with the capabilities of such:—neither on the one side absolutely identical; but neither, we may add, on the other only very remotely related to one another; for the differences between these last will be self-evident, will so lie on the surface and proclaim themselves to all, that it would be impossible to make them clearer than they already are, and it would be like holding a candle to the sun to attempt it. They must be words which are more or less liable to confusion, but which yet ought not to be confounded; words, as one has said, *quæ conjungi non confundi debent*; words in which there originally inhered a difference, or between which, though once absolutely identical, such has gradually grown up, and so established

itself in the use of the best writers, and in the instinct of the best speakers of the tongue, that it claims to be recognised and openly admitted by all.

But here an interesting question presents itself to us; this namely, how do languages come to possess synonyms of this latter class, which are differenced not by etymology or other deep-lying and necessary distinction, but only by usage? If languages had been made by agreement, of course no such words could exist; for when one word had been found which was the adequate representative of a feeling or an object, no further one would have been sought. But languages are the result of very different and far less formal and regular processes than this. Various tribes, each with its own dialect, kindred indeed but in many respects distinct, coalesce into one people, and cast their contributions of language into a common stock; sometimes two have the same word, but in forms sufficiently different to cause that both remain as different words; thus in Latin, "serpo" and "repo" are merely two slightly different appropriations of the same Greek word, and "puteo" and "fœteo" in like manner. Or again, a conquering people have fixed themselves in the midst of a conquered; they impose their dominion, but do not succeed in imposing their language; nay, being few in number, they find themselves at last compelled to adopt the language of the conquered; or after a while that which may be called a transaction, a compromise between the two languages, finds place.



Thus was it in England ; our modern English being in the main such a compromise between the Anglo-Saxon and the Norman-French.

These are causes of the existence of synonyms which reach back to an early period in the history of a nation and a language ; but other causes at a later period are also at work. When a written literature springs up, authors familiar with various foreign tongues, import from one and another words which are not absolutely required, which are oftentimes rather luxuries than necessities. Of these which are thus proposed as candidates for admission some fail to receive the rights of citizenship, and after longer or shorter probation are rejected ; it may be, never get beyond their first proposer. But enough receive the stamp of popular allowance to create embarrassment for a while, and until their relation with the already existing words is adjusted. As a single illustration of the various quarters from which the English has thus been augmented, and in the end enriched, I would instance the words "trick," "device," "finesse," "artifice," and "stratagem," and enumerate the various sources from which we have gotten these words. Here "trick" is Saxon, "devisa" is Italian, "finesse" is French, "artificium" is Latin, and "stratagema" Greek.

By and bye however, as a language becomes itself more an object of attention, at the same time that society, advancing from a simpler to a more cultivated state, has more things and thoughts to express, it is felt to be a waste of resources to have two or more words for the signifying of one and the

same object. Men feel, and rightly, that with a boundless world lying around them and demanding to be named, and which they only make their own in the measure that they name it, with infinite shades and variations of thought and feeling subsisting in their own minds, and claiming to find utterance in words, it is a mere and wanton extravagance to employ two or more signs on that which could adequately be set forth by one—an extravagance in one part of their expenditure, which would be almost sure to issue in, and to be punished by, a too great scantness and straitness in another. Some thought or feeling would be certain to want its adequate sign, because another has two. Hereupon that which has been well called the process of “desynonymizing” begins—that is, of gradually coming to discriminate in use between words which have hitherto been accounted perfectly equivalent, and, as such, indifferently employed. It is a positive enriching of a language when this process is felt to be accomplished, when two or more words which were once promiscuously used, are felt to have each its own peculiar domain assigned to it, which it shall not itself overstep, upon which the others shall not encroach.

It is not to be supposed that this desynonymizing process is effected according to any fixed purpose or plan. The working genius of the language accomplishes its own objects, causes these synonymous words insensibly to fall off from one another, and to acquire separate and peculiar meanings. The most that any single writer can do, is, as has been

observed, to assist an already existing inclination, to bring to the consciousness of all that which may already have been implicitly felt by many, and thus to hasten the process of this disengagement, and establish on a firm basis the distinction, so that it shall not again be lost sight of, or brought into question. This for instance Wordsworth did in respect of the words "imagination" and "fancy." Before he wrote, it was, I suppose, obscurely felt by most that in "imagination" there was more of the earnest, in "fancy" of the play, of the spirit, that the first was a loftier faculty and gift than the second; yet for all this the words were continually, and not without loss, confounded. He first, in the Preface to his *Lyrical Ballads*, rendered it henceforth impossible that any one, who had read and mastered what he had written on the two words, should remain unconscious any longer of the important difference existing between them.

Let me remark by the way how many other words in English are still waiting for such a discrimination. What an ethical gain for instance would it be, how much clearness would it bring into men's thoughts, if the distinction which exists in Latin between "vindicta" and "ultio," that the first is a moral act, the just punishment of the sinner by his God, of the criminal by the judge, the other an act in which the self-gratification of one who counts himself injured or offended is sought, could in like manner be established between "vengeance" and "revenge," so that only "vengeance" (with the verb "avenge") should be

ascribed to God, and to men acting as the executors of his righteous doom ; while all in which their evil and sinful passions are the impulsive motive should be exclusively termed "revenge." As it is, the moral disapprobation which cleaves, and cleaves justly, to "revenge," is oftentimes transferred almost unconsciously to "vengeance;" while yet without vengeance it is impossible to conceive in an evil world any assertion of righteousness, any moral government whatsoever.

The two causes which I mentioned above, the fact that English is in the main a compromise between the languages spoken by the Anglo-Saxon and the Norman, and the further circumstance that it has received, welcomed, and found place for many later additions, these causes have together effected that we possess in English a great many duplicates, not to speak of triplicates, or even such a quintuplicate as that which I adduced just now, where the Saxon, French, Italian, Latin, and Greek had each given us a word. Let me mention a few duplicate substantives, Anglo-Saxon and Latin ; thus we have "shepherd" and "pastor;" "feeling" and "sentiment;" "handbook" and "manual;" "shire" and "county;" "ship" and "nave;" "anger" and "ire;" "grief" and "dolour;" "love" and "charity;" "feather" and "plume;" "gospel" and "evangel;" "freedom" and "liberty;" "murder" and "homicide." Sometimes, in science and theology especially, we have gone both to the Latin and to the Greek, and drawn the same word from them both;

thus "Deist" and "Theist;" "numeration" and "arithmetic;" "Revelation" and "Apocalypse," both applied to the last book of Scripture. But to return to the Anglo-Saxon and Latin, the main factors of our tongue, besides duplicate substantives, we have many duplicate adjectives, as "bloody" and "sanguine;" "shady" and "umbrageous;" "fearful" and "timid;" "unreadable" and "illegible;" "manly" and "virile;" "almighty" and "omnipotent:" and verbs, as "to heal" and "to cure;" "to whiten" and "to blanch;" "to soften" and "to mollify;" "to cloke" and "to palliate;" with many more.

Occasionally where only one substantive, an Anglo-Saxon, exists, yet the adjectives are duplicate, and the English, which has not adopted the Latin substantive, has yet admitted the adjective; thus "burden" has not merely "burdensome" but also "onerous," while yet "onus" has found no place with us; "priest" has "priestly" and "sacerdotal;" "king" has "kingly," "regal," which is purely Latin, and "royal," which is Latin distilled through the Norman; "body" has "bodily" and "corporal;" and "boy," "boyish" and "puerile." These are but a handful of words out of the number which might be adduced, and I think you would find both pleasure and profit in seeking to add to these lists, and as far as you are able, to make them gradually complete.

I will observe by the way, that I have only adduced instances in which both the words have continued to maintain their ground in our spoken

and written language to the present day. Other cases are not few in which these duplicates once existed, but in which the one word has in the end proved fatal to and has extinguished the other. Thus "resurrection" and "againrising," no doubt existed contemporaneously; Wiclif uses them indifferently; we may say the same of "judge" and "doomsman," "adultery" and "spouse-breach," and of many words more. In each of these cases, however, instead of dividing the intellectual domain between them, the one word has definitively put the other out of use; the Latin word, as you will observe, has triumphed over the Anglo-Saxon. I am not of those who consider these triumphs to be in every case a matter of regret; though I cannot say that I should like to have had "pavone," which Spenser would have introduced, for our much older "peacock;" or "terremote," which Gower employs, for "earthquake," or other such Latinisms as these.

But to return; if we look closely at those other words which have succeeded in maintaining side by side their ground, we shall not fail to observe that in almost every instance they have vindicated for themselves separate spheres of meaning, that although not in etymology, they have still in use become more or less distinct. Thus we use "shepherd" almost always in its primary meaning, keeper of sheep; while "pastor" is exclusively used in the tropical sense, one that feeds the flock of God; at the same time the language having only the one adjective, "pastoral," that is of necessity common to both. "Love" and "charity" are used in our

authorized version of the New Testament promiscuously, and out of the sense of their equivalence are made to represent one and the same Greek word ; but in progress of use "charity" has come almost exclusively to signify one particular manifestation of love, the supply of the bodily needs of others, "love" continuing to express the affection of the soul. "Ship" remains in its literal meaning, while "nave" has become a symbolic term used in sacred architecture alone. In like manner with regard to "illegible" and "unreadable," the first has come to be applied to the handwriting, the second to the subject-matter written ; thus a man writes an "illegible" hand ; he has published an "unreadable" book. So too it well becomes boys to be "boyish," but not men to be "puerile." Or take "to blanch" and "to whiten:" we have grown to use the first in the sense of to withdraw colouring matter : thus we "blanch" almonds or linen ; the cheek is "blanched" with fear, that is, by the withdrawing of the blood ; but we "whiten" a wall, not by the withdrawing of some other colour, but by the superinducing of white ; thus "whited sepulchres." "To palliate" is not now used, though it once was, in the sense of wholly cloaking or covering over, as it might be, our sins, but in that of extenuating : "to palliate" our faults is not to hide them altogether, but to seek to diminish their guilt in part.

It might be urged that there was a certain preparedness in these words to separate off in their meaning from one another, inasmuch as they

originally belonged to different stocks; nor would I say that it was not so, or deny that this may have assisted; but we find the same process at work where difference of stock can have supplied no such assistance. "Astronomy" and "astrology" are both drawn from the Greek, nor is there any reason why the second should not be as honourable a word as the first: it signifies the *reason*, as astronomy the *law*, of the stars. But seeing there is a true and a false science of the stars, both needing words to express them, it has come to pass that in our later use, "astrology" designates always that pretended science of imposture, which, affecting to submit the moral freedom of men to the influences of the heavenly bodies, prognosticates future events from the position of these, as contrasted with "astronomy," that true science which investigates the laws of the heavenly bodies in their relations to one another and to the planet upon which we dwell.

As these are both from the Greek, so "despair" and "diffidence" are both, though one more directly than the other, from the Latin. It is not very long ago when the difference between them was hardly appreciable, when certainly it could not be affirmed of one of these words that it was very much stronger than the other. If in one the absence of all hope, in the other that of all faith, was implied. In proof I would only refer you to a book with which I am sure every English schoolmaster will wish to be familiar, I mean the *Pilgrim's Progress*,



where Mistress "Diffidence" is Giant "Despair's" wife, and not a whit behind him in her deadly enmity to the pilgrims. And Jeremy Taylor speaks of the impenitent sinner's "diffidence" in the hour of death, meaning, as the context plainly shows, his despair. But to what end two words for one and the same thing? And thus "diffidence" did not retain that force of meaning which it had at the first, but little by little assumed a more mitigated sense, till it has come in our present English to signify a becoming distrust of ourselves, an humble estimate of our own powers, with only a slight intimation in the word, that perhaps this distrust is carried too far.

Again, "interference" and "interposition" are both words from the Latin; and here too there is no anterior necessity, it lies not in the several derivations of the words, that they should have the different shades of meaning which yet they have obtained among us;—the Latin verbs "fero" and "pono," which form their latter halves, being about as strong one as the other. And yet in our practical use, "interference" is something offensive; it is the pushing in of himself between two parties on the part of a third, who was not asked, and is not thanked for his pains, and who, as the feeling of the word implies, had no business there; while "interposition" is employed to express the friendly peacemaking mediation of one whom the act well became, and who, even if he was not specially invited thereunto, is still thanked for his pains. How real an increase is it in the wealth and

capabilities of a language thus to have discriminated such words as these; and to be able to express acts outwardly the same by different words, as we would praise or blame them.\*

But these which I have named are not the only desynonymizing processes which are going forward in a language; for we may observe in almost all languages, and not the least in our own, a tendency to the formation of new words out of what were at the first no more than different pronunciations, or even slightly different spellings, of one and the same word; which yet in the end detach themselves from one another, not again to reunite; just as accidental varieties in fruits or flowers, produced at hazard, have yet permanently separated off and settled into different kinds. Sometimes as the

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\* It must at the same time be acknowledged, that if in the course of time distinctions are thus created, and if this is the tendency of language, yet they are also sometimes, though far less often, obliterated. Thus the fine distinction between "yea" and "yes," "nay" and "no," that once existed in English has quite disappeared. "Yea" and "Nay" in Wiclif's time, and a good deal later, were the answers to questions framed in the affirmative. "Will he come?" To this it would have been replied, "Yea" or "Nay," as the case might be. But, "Will he not come?"—to this the answer would have been, "Yes," or "No." Sir Thomas More finds fault with Tyndale, that in his translation of the Bible he had not observed this distinction, which was evidently therefore going out even then, that is in the reign of Henry VIII.; and shortly after it was quite forgotten.

accent is placed on one syllable of a word or another, it comes to have different significations, and those so distinctly marked, that it may be considered out of one word to have grown into two. Examples of this are the following: "d́ivers" and "divérse;" "cónjure" and "conjúre;" "ántic" and "antíque;" "húman" and "humáne;" "géntle" and "gentéel;" "próperty" and "propriety." Or again, a word is pronounced with a full sound of its syllables, or somewhat more shortly: thus "spirit" and "spright;" "blossom" and "bloom;" "piety" and "pity;" "courtesy" and "curtsey;" "personality" and "personalty;" "fantasy" and "fancy;" "triumph" and "trump" (the winning card);" \* "happily" and "haply;" "poesy" and "posy;"—or with the dropping of the first syllable: "history" and "story;" "etiquette" and "ticket;" "eremite" and "hermit;" "estate" and "state;"—or without losing a syllable, with more or less stress laid on the close: "regiment" and "regimen;" "corpse" and "corps;" "bite" and "bit;" "sire" and "sir;" "stripe" and "strip;" "borne" and "born;" "clothes" and "cloths." Or there has grown up some other slight distinction, as between "ghostly" and "ghastly;" "utter" and "outer;" "mettle" and "metal;" "parson" and "person;" "ingenious" and "ingenuous;" "prune" and

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\* If there were any doubt about this matter, which indeed there is not, a reference to Latimer's famous Sermon on Cards would abundantly remove it, where "triumph" and "trump" are interchangeably used.

“preen;” “cleft” and “clift,” now written “cliff;” “cure” and “care;” “travel” and “travail;” “harlot” and “varlet;” “can” and “ken;” “gambol” and “gamble;” “truth” and “troth;” “lose” and “loose;” “price” and “prize;” “errant” and “arrant;” I do not know whether we ought to add to these, “news” and “noise,” which some tell us to be the same word: at any rate the identifying of them is instructive, for how much news is but noise, and passes away like a noise before long. Or, it may be, the difference which constitutes the two forms of the word into two words is one in the spelling, and so slight a one even there as to be appreciable only by the eye, and to escape altogether the ear: thus is it with “quean” and “queen;” “plain” and “plane;” “flower” and “flour;” “check” and “cheque.”

Now if you will follow up these instances, you will find, I believe, in every case that there has attached itself to each of the forms of the words a modification of meaning more or less sensible, that each has won for itself an independent sphere in which it and it only moves.

Take a few instances in illustration. “Divers” expresses difference only, but “diverse” difference with opposition; thus the several Evangelists narrate the same events in “divers” manners, but not in “diverse.” “Antique” is ancient, but “antic” is now the ancient regarded as overlived, out of date, and so in our days grotesque, ridiculous; and then with a dropping of the reference to age, the grotesque, the ridiculous alone. “Human” is what

every man is, "humane" is what every man ought to be; for Johnson's suggestion that "humane" is from the French feminine, "humaine," and "human" from the masculine, cannot, for an instant, be admitted. "Ingenious" is an adjective expressing a mental, "ingenuous" a moral, excellence; a gardener "prunes," that is, trims his trees, birds "preen" or trim their feathers; "bloom" is a finer and a more delicate efflorescence even than "blossom;" thus, the "bloom," but not the "blossom," of the cheek; a "curtsey" is one, and that merely an external, manifestation of "courtesy;" "gambling" may be, as with a fearful irony it is called, *play*, but it is nearly as distant from "gambolling" as hell is from heaven. Nor would it be hard, in each other of the words which I have instanced, nor in others of like kind which no doubt might be added to them, to trace a distinction which has made itself more or less strongly felt.\*

Let us now take some words which are not thus desynonymized by usage only, but which have an inherent etymological distinction,—one, however, which it might be easy to overlook, which so long as we dwell on the surface of the word we shall

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\* The same happens in other languages. Thus, to take a single example, in Latin "pinna" and "penna" are only different spellings of the same word, and signify alike "a wing;" while yet in practice "penna" has come to be used for the wing of a bird, "pinna" (the diminutive of which, "pinnaculum," has given us pinnacle) for that of a building.

overlook; and let us see whether we shall not be gainers by bringing out the distinction into clear consciousness. Here are the words, "arrogant," "presumptuous," and "insolent." We often use them promiscuously; yet let us examine them a little more closely, and ask ourselves, so soon as we have succeeded in tracing the lines of demarcation between them, whether we are not now in possession of three distinct thoughts, instead of a single confused one. Thus, he is "arrogant" who, overstepping the limits of what justly is his, claims the observance and homage of others as his due, (*ad rogat*,) does not wait for them to offer, but himself demands it; or who, having right to one sort of observance, claims another to which he has no right. Thus, it was "arrogance" in Nebuchadnezzar, when he required that all men should fall down before the image which he had reared. He, a man, was claiming for man's work the homage which belonged only to God. But one is "presumptuous" who *takes* things to himself *before* he has acquired any right and title to them, (*præsumit*,) the young man who already takes the place of the old, the learner who speaks as with the authority of the teacher. By and bye all this may very justly be his, but it is "presumption" to anticipate it now. "Insolent" means properly no more than unusual; to act "insolently" is to act unusually. The offensive sense which the word has acquired rests upon the feeling that there is a certain well-understood rule of society, a recognised standard of moral behaviour, to which each of its members should conform. The

“insolent” man is one who violates this rule, who breaks through this order, acting in an unaccustomed manner. The same sense of the orderly being also the moral, speaks out in the word “irregular;” a man of “irregular,” is for us a man of immoral, life; and yet more strongly in the Latin language, which has but one word, (*mores*,) for customs and morals.

Or consider the following words ; “to hate,” “to loathe,” “to detest,” and “to abhor.” Each of them rests on an image entirely distinct from the others ; two, that is the first and second, being Anglo-Saxon, and the others Latin. “To hate” is properly to be “inflamed” with passionate dislike, the word being connected with “heat,” “hot;” just as we speak, using the same figure, of persons being “incensed” with anger, or of their anger “kindling :” “*ira*” and “*uro*” being related. “To loathe” is properly to feel nausea, the turning of the stomach at that which excites first natural, and then by a transfer, moral disgust. “To detest” is to bear witness against, not to be able to keep silence in regard of something, but to feel ourselves obliged to lift up our voice and testimony against it. “To abhor” is to shrink shuddering back, as one would from an object of fear, as an hissing serpent rising in one’s path. Our blessed Lord “hated” to see his Father’s house profaned, when the zeal of that house consuming Him, He drove forth in anger the profaners from it : He “loathed” the lukewarmness of the Laodiceans, when He threatened to reject them out of his mouth ; He

"detested" the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Scribes, when He proclaimed their sin and uttered those eight woes against them (Matt. 23). He "abhorred" the evil suggestions of Satan, when He sought to put a distance between Himself and that tempter, bidding him to get behind Him.

You will observe that in most of the words which I have adduced, I have sought to refer their usage to their etymologies, to follow the guidance of these, and by the same aid to trace the lines of demarcation which divide them. For I cannot but think it an omission in a very instructive little volume upon synonyms which has lately been edited by Archbishop Whately, and a partial diminution of its usefulness, that in the valuation of words reference is so seldom made to these, the writer relying almost entirely on present usage, and the tact and instinct of a cultivated mind for the appreciation of them aright. The accomplished author (or authoress) of this book indeed justifies this omission on the ground that a book of synonyms has to do with the present relative value of words, not with their roots and derivations; and further, that a reference to these brings in often that which is only a disturbing force in the process, tending to confuse rather than to clear.\* But

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\* Among the words of which the etymology, if we were to suffer ourselves to be led by it, would place us altogether on a wrong track as to its present meaning, the writer adduces "allegiance," which by usage signifies "the fidelity of the subject to his prince," while the etymology would rather suggest "conformity to law." But surely this



while it is quite true that words may often ride very slackly at anchor on their etymologies, may be borne hither and thither by the shifting tides and currents of usage, yet are they for the most part still holden by them. Very few have broken away and drifted from their moorings altogether. A "novelist," or writer of *new* tales in the present day is very different from a "novelist" or upholder of *new* theories in politics and religion, of two hundred years ago; yet the idea of *newness* is common to them both. A "naturalist" was then a denier of revealed truth, of any but *natural* religion; he is now an investigator of *nature*; yet the word has remained true to its etymology all the while. Take other words which have

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derivation of it, as though it were "ad legem," is an erroneous one. It is rather derived from "alligo," as "liege" from "ligo; and thus is perfectly true to its etymology, signifying as it does the obligation wherewith one is bound to his superior. Algernon Sidney, in his *Discourse concerning Government*, c. 3, § 36, falls into the same mistake; for, replying to some who maintained that submission was due to kings, even though they should act in direct contradiction to the fundamental laws of the kingdom, he observes that the very word "allegiance," of which they made so much, refuted them; for this was plainly "such an obedience as the law requires." He would have done better appealing, as indeed on one occasion he does, to the word "loyalty," which, being derived from "loi," expresses properly that fidelity which one owes according to the law, and does not necessarily include that sense of attachment to the royal person, which happily we in England have been able further to throw into the word.

changed or modified their meaning,—“plantations,” for instance, which were once colonies of men, (and indeed we still *plant* a colony,) but are now nurseries of young trees, and you will find the same to hold good. “Ecstasy” *was* madness, it *is* delight, but in neither case has it departed from its fundamental meaning, since it is the nature alike of this and that *to set men out of and beside themselves*. And even when the matter is not so obvious as in these cases, the etymology of a word exercises an unconscious influence upon its usages, oftentimes makes itself felt when least expected, so that a word, after seeming quite to have forgotten, will after longest wanderings, return to it again. And one of the arts of a great poet or prose writer, who wishes to add emphasis to his style, to bring out all the latent forces of his native tongue, will very often be to reconnect by his use of it, a word with its original derivation, and not suffer it to forget itself though it would. How often Milton does this. And even if all this were not so, yet the past history of a word, which history must needs *start* from its derivation, how soon soever that may be left behind, is surely a necessary element in its present valuation. A man may be wholly different now from what once he was, yet not the less to know his antecedents is needful, before we can ever perfectly understand his present self; and the same holds good with a word.

There is often a moral value in the possession of synonyms, enabling us, as they do, to say exactly what we intend, without exaggeration, or the

putting of more into our words than we feel in our hearts, allowing us thus to be at the same time precise and courteous. Such moral advantage there is, for example, in the choice which we have between the words "to felicitate" and "to congratulate," for the expressing of our sentiments and wishes in regard of the good fortune that happens to others. "To felicitate" another is to wish him happiness, without affirming that his happiness is also ours. Thus out of that general goodwill with which we ought to regard all, we might "felicitate" one almost a stranger to us ; nay, more, I can honestly felicitate one on his appointment to a post, or attainment of an honour, even though I may not consider him the fittest to have obtained it, though I should have been glad if another had done so ; I can desire and hope, that is, that it may bring all joy and happiness to him ; but I could not, without a violation of truth, "congratulate" him, or that stranger whose prosperity awoke no lively delight in my heart ; for when I congratulate a person, (con gratulor,) I declare that I am sharer in his joy, that what has rejoiced him has rejoiced also me. We have all, I dare say, felt, even without having made any such analysis of the distinction between the words, that "congratulate" is a far heartier word than "felicitate," and is the word with which it best becomes us to welcome the good fortune of a friend ; and the analysis, as you perceive, perfectly justifies the feeling. "Felicitations" are little better than compliments ; "congratulations" are the expression of a genuine sympathy and joy.

Let me illustrate the importance of synonymous distinctions by another example ; by the words, "to invent" and "to discover;" "invention" and "discovery." How slight may seem to us the distinction between them, even if we see any at all. Yet try them a little closer, try them, which is the true proof, by aid of examples, and you will perceive that by no means can they be indifferently used—that on the contrary a great principle lies at the root of their distinction. Thus we speak of the "invention" of printing, the "discovery" of America. Shift these words, and speak, for instance, of the "invention" of America ; you feel at once how unsuitable the language is. And why? Because Columbus did not make that to be, which before him had not been. America was there, before he revealed it to European eyes ; but that which before was, he showed to be ; he withdrew the veil which hitherto had concealed it ; he "discovered" it. So too we speak of Newton "discovering" the law of gravitation ; he drew aside the veil whereby men's eyes were hindered from perceiving it, but the law had existed from the beginning of the world, and would have existed whether he or any other man had traced it or no ; neither was it in any way affected by the discovery of it which he had made. But Gutenberg, or whoever else it may have been to whom the honour belongs, "invented" printing ; he made something to be, which hitherto was not. In like manner Harvey "discovered" the circulation of the blood, but Watt "invented" the steam engine ; and we speak with

a true distinction, of the "inventions" of Art, the "discoveries" of Science.

In the very highest matters of all, it is deeply important that we be aware of and observe the distinction. In religion there have been many "discoveries," but (in true religion I mean) no "inventions." Many discoveries—but God in each case is the discoverer; He draws away the veils, one veil after another, that have hidden Him from men; the discovery or revelation is from Himself, for no man by searching has found out God; and therefore, wherever anything offers itself as an "invention" in matters of religion, it proclaims itself a lie,—all self-devised worships, all religions which man projects from his own heart. Just that is known of God which He is pleased to make known, and no more; and men's recognising or refusing to recognise in no ways affects it. They may deny or own Him, but He continues the same.

As involving in like manner a distinction which cannot safely be lost sight of, how important is it to keep in mind the difference, of which the existence is asserted by the fact that we possess the two words, "to apprehend" and "to comprehend," with their substantives, "apprehension" and "comprehension." For indeed we "apprehend" many truths, which we do not "comprehend." The great mysteries of our faith, the doctrine for instance of the Holy Trinity,—we lay hold upon it, (*adprehendo*,) we hang on it, our souls live by it; but we do not "comprehend" it, that is, we do not take it all in; for it is a necessary attribute of God that

He is incomprehensible; if He were not so, He would not be God, or the being that comprehended Him would be God also. But it also belongs to the idea of God that He may be "apprehended," though not "comprehended," by his reasonable creatures; He has made them to know Him, though not to know Him all, to "apprehend," though not to "comprehend," Him.

We may transfer with profit the same distinction to matters not quite so solemn. I read Goldsmith's *Traveller*, or one of Gay's fables, and I feel that I "comprehend" it. I do not believe, that is, that there was anything in the poet's mind or intention, which I have not in the reading reproduced in my own. But I read *Hamlet*, or *King Lear*: here I "apprehend" much; I have wondrous glimpses of the poet's intention and aim; but I do not for an instant suppose that I have "comprehended," taken in, that is, all that was in his mind in the writing; or that his purpose does not stretch in manifold directions far beyond the range of my vision; and I am sure there are few who would not shrink from affirming, at least if they at all realized the force of the words they were using, that they "comprehended" Shakespeare; however much they may "apprehend" in him.

It will happen continually that rightly to distinguish between two words will throw great light upon some controversy in which those words play a principal part. There is no such fruitful source of confusion and mischief as this—two words are tacitly assumed as equivalent, and therefore ex-

changeable, and then that which may be assumed, and with truth, of one, is transferred to the other, of which it is not true. Thus, for instance, it often is with "instruction" and "education." Cannot we "instruct" a child, it is asked, cannot we teach it geography, or arithmetic, or grammar, quite independently of the Catechism, or even of the Scriptures? No doubt you may, but can you "educate," without bringing moral and spiritual forces to bear upon the mind and affections of the child? And you must not be permitted to transfer the admissions which we freely make in regard of "instruction," as though they also held good in respect of "education." For what is "education"? Is it a furnishing of a man from without with knowledge and facts and information? or is it a drawing forth from within and a training of the spirit, of the true humanity which is latent within him? Is the process of education the filling of the child's mind, as a cistern is filled with waters brought in buckets from some other source, or the opening up of its own fountains? Now if we give any heed to the word "education," and to the voice which speaks in the word, we shall not long be in doubt. For what is education? it is to educe, from "educare," which is but another form of "educere;" and that is "to draw out," and not to "put in." "To draw out" what is in the child, the immortal spirit which is there, this is the end of education; and so the word declares. The putting in is indeed most needful, that is, the child must be instructed as well as educated, and the word "instruction" just

means furnishing; but not instructed instead of educated. He must first have powers awakened in him, measures of spiritual value given him; and then he will know how to deal with the facts of this outward world; then instruction in these will profit him; but not without the higher training, still less as a substitute for it.

It has occasionally happened that the question of which out of two apparent synonyms should be adopted in some important state document has been debated with no little earnestness and vigour. Thus was it, for example, at the great English Revolution of 1688, when the two Houses of Parliament were for a considerable time at issue whether it should be declared of James the Second, that he had "abdicated" or "deserted" the throne. This might seem at first sight a mere strife and contest about words, and yet, in reality, serious constitutional questions were involved in the selection of the one word or the other. The Commons insisted on the word "abdicated," not as wishing to imply that in any act of the late king there had been an official renunciation of the crown, which would have been manifestly untrue; but because "abdicated" to their minds alone expressed the fact that James had so borne himself as virtually to have entirely renounced, disowned, and relinquished the crown, and thus to have irrevocably forfeited and separated himself from it, and from any right to it for ever; while the word "deserted" seemed to leave room and an opening for a return, which they were determined to declare for ever excluded; as were it



said of an husband that he had "deserted" his wife, or of a soldier that he had "deserted" his colours, this language would imply not only that he might return, but that he ought and was bound to do so. Lord Somers' speech on the occasion is a masterly specimen of synonymous discrimination, and an evidence of the uses in highest matters of state to which it may be turned.

Let me press upon you in conclusion some few of the many advantages to be derived from the habit of distinguishing synonyms. These advantages we might presume to be many, even though we could not ourselves perceive them; for how often do the great masters of style in every tongue, perhaps none so often as Cicero, the greatest,\* pause to discriminate between the words they are using; how much care and labour, how much subtlety of thought, they have counted well bestowed on the operation; how much importance do they attach to it. But the advantages need not be taken on trust; they are evident. How great a part of true wisdom it is to be able to separate between things seemingly, but not really alike, this is remarkably attested by our words "discernment" and "discretion;" which are now used as equivalent, the first to "insight," the second to "prudence;" while yet in their earlier usage, and according to their etymology, being both from "discerno," they signify the power of so seeing things that in

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\* Augustine calls him well, *Verborum vigilantissimus appensor et mensor*.

the seeing we distinguish and separate them one from another. Such were originally "discernment" and "discretion," and such in great measure they are still. And in words is a material ever at hand on which to train the spirit to a skilfulness in this; on which to exercise its sagacity through the habit of distinguishing there where it would be so easy to confound. Nor is it only valuable as a part of our intellectual training; but what a positive increase is it of mental wealth when we have learned to discern between things which really differ, but had been hitherto confused in our minds; and have made these distinctions permanently our own in the only way by which they can be made secure, that is, by assigning to each its appropriate word and peculiar sign.

What an help moreover to the writing of a good English style, when instead of having many words before us, and choosing almost at random and at haphazard from among them, we at once know which, and which only, we ought in the case before us to employ, which will be the exact vesture of our thought. It is the first characteristic of a well-dressed man that his clothes fit him: they are not too small and shrunken here, too large and loose there. Now it is precisely such a prime characteristic of a good style that the words fit close to the thoughts: they will not be too big here, hanging like a giant's robe on the limbs of a dwarf; nor too small there, as a boy's garments into which the man has with difficulty and ridiculously thrust himself. You do not feel in one place that the

writer means more than he has succeeded in saying ; in another that he has said more than he means ; or in a third something beside what his intention was : and all this, from a lack of dexterity in employing the instrument of language, of precision in knowing what words would be the exactest correspondents and fittest exponents of his thought.

Not let us suppose this power of exactly saying what we mean, and neither more nor less than we mean, to be merely an elegant mental accomplishment ; it is indeed this, and perhaps there is no power so surely indicative of a high and accurate training of the intellectual faculties. But it is also much more than this: it has a moral meaning as well. It is nearly allied to morality, inasmuch as it is nearly connected with truthfulness. Every man who has himself in any degree cared for the truth, and occupied himself in seeking it, is more or less aware how much of the falsehood which is in the world passes current under the concealment of words, how many strifes and controversies,

“ Which feed the simple and offend the wise,”

find all or nearly all their fuel and their nourishment in words carelessly or dishonestly employed. And when a man has had any actual experience of this fact, and has at all perceived how far this mischief reaches, he is sometimes almost tempted to say with Shakespeare's Clown, “ Words are grown so false, I am loath to prove reason with them.” He cannot, however, forego their

employment, not to say that he will presently perceive that this falseness of theirs whereof he accuses them, this cheating power of words, is not of their proper use, but their abuse; that however they may have been enlisted in the service of lies, they are yet of themselves most true, and that where the bane is, there the antidote should be sought as well. Ask then words what they mean, that you may deliver yourselves, that you may help to deliver others, from the tyranny of words, and from the strife of "word-warriors." Learn to distinguish between them, for you have the authority of Hooker, that "the mixture of those things by speech, which by nature are divided, is the mother of all error." And although I cannot promise you that the study of synonyms, or the acquaintance with derivations, or any other knowledge but the very highest knowledge of all, will deliver you from the temptation to misuse this or any other gift of God—a temptation which always lies so near us—yet I am sure that these studies rightly pursued will do much in leading us to stand in awe of this divine gift of words, and to tremble at the thought of turning it to any other than those worthy ends for which God has endowed us with it.

## LECTURE V.

## THE SCHOOLMASTER'S USE OF WORDS.

I PROPOSE in this my concluding lecture to apply, and to suggest some ways in which you may apply, what has been hitherto spoken to practical ends, making this study of words, which I have been pressing upon you, to tell upon your own teaching hereafter; for assuredly we ought never to disconnect what we ourselves may learn, from the hope and expectation of being able by its aid to teach others more effectually; when we do so, it becomes instantly a selfish thing. A noble line in Chaucer, where, characterizing the true scholar, he says of him,

“ And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach,”

this we should do well to take each one of us as our motto.

But to address ourselves to the matter more directly in hand. You all here are made acquainted, I believe, with a good deal more than the first rudiments of the Latin tongue. Every one who can at all appreciate what your future work will be, must rejoice that it is so. Indeed, it is hard to understand how you could be otherwise fitted and accomplished for the work which you have before you. It is conceivable in languages like the Greek and the German, which, for all practical purposes, may

be considered rounded and complete in themselves, which contain all the resources for discovering the origin and meaning of their words in their own bosom, or so nearly so, that the few exceptions need not be taken into account, it is conceivable in such languages that a thorough knowledge of his own tongue may be attained by one who remains ignorant of any other, and that he may be able to impart to others this same knowledge which he himself possesses. In fact, the Greek, who certainly understood his own language thoroughly, never did extend his knowledge beyond it. But it is different with English. Would we follow up its words, not to their ultimate sources, but only a step or two, it carries us at once beyond itself and to a foreign soil, and mainly to the Latin. This being the case, he who has not some acquaintance with Latin can only explain a vast number of words loosely and at hazard; he has some general sense or impression of what they intend, of the ideas which they represent, but nothing certain. He stands on no solid ground; he does not feel able to plant himself securely as at a middle point, from which, as from a common centre, all its different meanings diverge.

And having these convictions in regard of the advantage of following up words to their sources, of "deriving" them, that is, of tracing each little rill to the river for which it first was drawn, let me observe by the way, and as something not remote from our subject, but, on the contrary, directly bearing upon it, that I can conceive no method of so effectually defacing our English tongue, nothing that would go so far to empty it, practically at

least and for us, of all the hoarded wit, wisdom, imagination, and history which it contains, as the introduction of the scheme of so-called "phonetic spelling," which some have lately been advocating among us; the principle of which system is that all words should be spelt according as they are sounded, that the writing should be, in every case, subordinated to the speaking. The gains of such a change would be insignificantly small, while the losses would be enormously great. The gains would be the saving of a certain amount of labour in the learning to spell; which amount of labour, however, is absurdly exaggerated by the upholders of the scheme. This labour, whatever it is, would be in great part saved, as the pronunciation would at once put in possession of the spelling; if, indeed, spelling or orthography could then be said to exist. But even this insignificant gain would not long remain, seeing that pronunciation is itself continually altering; custom is lord here for better or for worse; and a multitude of words are now pronounced in a different manner from that of an hundred years ago, so that, ere very long, there would again be a chasm between the spelling and pronunciation of words.

This fact, however, though alone sufficient to show how little the scheme of phonetic spelling would remove even those inconveniences which it proposes to remedy, is only the smallest objection to it. The far deeper and more serious one is, that in innumerable instances it would obliterate altogether those clear marks of birth and parentage,

which, if not all, yet so many of our words bear now upon their very fronts, or are ready, upon a very slight interrogation, to declare to us. Words have now an ancestry; and the ancestry of words as of men is often a very noble part of them, making them capable of great things, because those from whom they were derived have done great things before them. Words are now a nation, grouped into families, some smaller, some larger; this change would go far to reduce them to a wild and barbarous horde. Both these objections had been urged by Bacon, who characterizes this so-called reformation, "that writing should be consonant to speaking," as "a branch of unprofitable subtlety;" and especially urges that thereby "the derivations of words, especially from foreign languages, are utterly defaced and extinguished."

Even now the relationships of words, which yet are so important for our right understanding of them, are continually overlooked; a very little thing serving to conceal it from us. For example, what a multitude of our nouns substantive and adjective are, in fact, unsuspected participles, or are otherwise most closely connected with verbs, with which notwithstanding, until some one points out the fact to us, we probably never think of putting them in any relation. And yet with how lively an interest shall we discover words to be of closest kin, which we had never considered till now but as entire strangers to one another; what a real increase will it be in our acquaintance with and



mastery of English to become aware of such relationship. Thus "heaven" is only the perfect of "to heave;" and is so called because it is "heaved" or "heaven" up, being properly the sky as it is raised aloft; the "smith" has his name from the sturdy blows that he "smites" upon the anvil; "wrong" is the perfect participle of "to wring," that which one has "wrung" or wrested from the right; "guilt," of "to guile" or "beguile;" to find "guilt" in a man is to find that he has been "beguiled," that is, by the devil, *instigante diabolo*, as it is inserted in all indictments for murder, the forms of which come down to us from a time when men were not ashamed of tracing evil to his inspiration. The "brunt" of the battle is the heat of the battle, where it "burns" the most fiercely. "Haft," as the haft of a knife, is properly only the participle perfect of "to have," that whereby you "have" or hold it. Or take two or three nouns adjective; "strong" is the participle past of "to string;" a "strong" man means no more than one whose sinews are firmly "strung." The "left" hand, as distinguished from the right, is the hand which we "leave;" inasmuch as for twenty times we use the right hand, we do not once employ *it*; and it has thus its name from being "left" unused so often. "Odd" is properly "owed;" an odd glove, or an odd shoe is one that is "owed" to another, or to which another is "owed" for the making of a pair—just as we speak of a man being "singular," wanting, that is, his match. "Wild" is the participle past of "to will;" a "wild"

horse is a "willed" or self-willed horse, one that has been never tamed or taught to submit its will to the will of another ; and so with a man.

This exercise of putting words in their true relation and connexion with one another might be carried much further. We might take whole groups of words, which seem to us at first sight to acknowledge hardly any kinship, if indeed any, with one another, and yet with no great difficulty show that they had a common parentage and descent. For instance, here are "shire," "shore," "share," "sheers;" "shred," "sherd;" they all are derived from one Anglo-Saxon word, which signifies to separate or divide, and still exists with us in the shape of "to sheer," which made in old times the three perfects, "shore," "share," "shered." "Shire" is a district in England, as it is separated from the rest ; a "share" is a portion of anything thus divided off ; "sheers" are instruments effecting this process of separation ; the "shore" is the place where the continuity of the land is interrupted or separated by the sea ; a "shred" is that which is shered, or shorn from the main piece ; a "sherd," as a pot-sherd, that which is broken off and thus divided from the vessel ; and these which I have adduced by no means exhaust this group or family of words, though it would take more time than I can spare to put some other words in relation with them.

But this analyzing of groups of words for the detecting of the bond of relationship between them, and the one root out of which they all grow, is a

process which may require more etymological knowledge and more helps from books than you can always expect to command. There is another process, and one which may prove no less useful to yourselves and to others, which will lie more nearly within your reach. It will often happen that you will meet in books, sometimes in the same page of a book, a word used in senses so far apart from one another, that it will seem to you at first sight almost inconceivable that there can be any bond of connexion between them. Now when you do thus meet a word employed in these two or more senses seemingly far removed from one another, accustom yourselves to seek out the bond which there certainly is between these its several uses. This tracing of that which is common to and connects all its meanings can of course only be done by getting to its heart, to the seminal meaning, from which, as from a fruitful seed, all the others unfold themselves; to the first link in the chain, from which all the others depend. And we may proceed in this investigation, certain that we shall find such, or at least that such therein is to be found. For this we may start with, as being lifted above all doubt (and the non-recognition of it is *the* great fault in Johnson's Dictionary) that a word has originally but one meaning, and that all the others, however widely they may diverge from one another and seem to recede from this one, may yet be affiliated upon it, may be brought back to the one central meaning, which grasps and holds them all together; just as the races of men, black, white, and red,

despite of all this present diversity and dispersion, have a central point of unity in their first parents.

Let me illustrate what I mean by two or three familiar examples. Here is the word "post;" how various are the senses in which it is employed; "post"-office; "post"-haste; "post" standing in the ground; a military "post;" an official "post;" "to post" a leger. Might one not at first presume it impossible to bring all these uses of a "post" to a common centre? Yet indeed nothing is easier; "post" is the Latin "*positus*," that which is *placed*; the piece of timber is "placed" in the ground, and so a "post;" a military station is a "post," for a man is "placed" in it, and must not quit it without due orders; to travel "post," is to have certain relays of horses "placed" at intervals, that so no delay on the way may occur. The "Post"-Office is that which avails itself of this mode of communication; to "post" a leger is to "place" or register the several items in it.

Or take the word "stock;" in what an almost infinite number of senses it is employed; we have live "stock," "stock" in trade, the village "stocks," the "stock" of a gun, the "stocks" on which ships are built, the "stock" which goes round the neck, the family "stock," the "stocks," or public funds, in which money is invested, and other "stocks" very likely besides these. What point in common can we find between them all? This, namely, that they are all derived from, and were originally the past participle of, "to stick," which as it now makes "stuck," made formerly "stock;" and they cohere in the

idea of *fixedness*, which is common to every one. Thus, the "stock" of a gun is that in which the barrel is fixed; the village "stocks," are those in which the feet are fastened; the "stock" in trade, is the fixed capital; and so too, the "stock" on the farm, although the fixed capital has there taken the shape of horses and cattle. In the "stocks," or public funds, money sticks fast, inasmuch as those who place it there cannot withdraw or demand the capital, but receive only the interest; the "stock" of a tree is fast set in the ground; and from this use of the word it is transferred to a family; the "stock" or "stirps" is that from which it grows, and out of which it unfolds itself. I might group with these, "stake" in both its spellings; a "stake" in the hedge is stuck and fixed there; the "stakes" which men wager against the issue of a race are paid down, and thus fixed or deposited to answer the event; a beef-"steak" is a piece of meat so small that it can be stuck on the point of a fork; with much more of the same kind.

How often does the word "quick" in the Creed perplex children; and even after they have learned that "the *quick* and the dead" mean the living and the dead, they know it only on trust; for they fail to put this "quick" in any connexion with the "quick" of their own vocabulary, the "quick" with which they bid one another to throw up the ball, or the "quick"-set hedge which runs round their father's garden, or the "quick" parts for which some unwise person has praised one of them at

school: yet that all these are one and the same "quick" it is of course very easy to show. Life is the fundamental idea of the word "quick," and in this its primary sense it is used in the Creed, "the quick and the dead:" so too the "quick"-set hedge is properly the living fence, as contrasted with those made of dead timbers. But motion, as it is at once of the essence, so is it also one of the most obvious signs of life; and thus "quick" in a secondary sense was applied to all which was rapid or prompt in its motions, whether bodily or mental; thus a "quick" runner, a boy of "quick" parts; and so too "quick"-silver, or "quick," that is, fast shifting sand. The same sense of the connexion between life and motion has given us our secondary use of the words, "animated" and "lively."

Sometimes a slightly different spelling comes in aid of an enormous divergence of meaning, to disguise the fact of two words having originally rested on one and the same etymology, and really being so closely related to one another, that we may say, in fact, they are one and the same word. I would instance as a notable example of this, "canon" with a single *n*, as the "canon" of Scripture, and "cannon" or heavy artillery. Can there, it may well be asked, be any point in common between them? can their etymologies be ultimately the same? I believe they are. The word "canon" with a single *n*, which is a Greek word, means properly "rule;" first, the measuring rule or line of the carpenter; and then figuratively any measure or rule by which we try other things; and in

its crowning use, the Holy Scriptures, as being regulative of life and doctrine in the Church. But the carpenter's rule was commonly a reed, (*canna*), that being selected on account of its straightness; you may remember in Scripture mention once or twice being made of the measuring "reed;" (Rev. xxi. 15, 16;) and from this reed or "*canna*," the rule or line, (the "*canon*,") had its name, or at any rate the words are most closely allied. A reed however, as we all know, besides being *straight* is also *hollow*, and thus it came to pass when the hollow engines of war, our modern artillery, were invented, and were feeling about for their appropriate name, none was nearer at hand than this which the reed supplied, and they were called "*cannon*" too.\*

When it is thus said that we can always reduce the different meanings which a word has to some one point from which they all immediately or mediately proceed, that no word has primarily more than one meaning, it must be remembered that it is quite possible there may be two words pronounced and even spelt exactly alike, which yet are wholly different in their derivation and primary usage; and that of course between these no bond of union on the score of this identity is to be sought,

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\* In confirmation of this view of the derivation of "*cannon*," and in proof that it lay very near to the imagination of men to liken them to reeds, we have the application of "*Rohr*" in German, which, at first signifying a cane or reed, has in like manner been applied to the barrel of a gun.

neither does this fact in the least invalidate the rule. We have in such cases, as Cobbett has expressed it well, the same combination of letters, but not the same word. Thus we have "page," the one side of a leaf, from "pagina," and "page," a youthful attendant, from quite another word; "league," a treaty, from "ligare," to bind, and "league," a measure of distance, which is thought to be a word of Gallic origin; we have "host," an army, from "hostis," and "host," in the Roman Catholic sacrifice of the mass, from "hostia;" so too "stories," which we tell, and "stories" or "stayeries" of a house, which we mount; with other words, such as "ounce," "dole," "bull," "plain," not a few. In all these the identity is merely on the surface, and it would of course be lost labour to seek for a point of contact between meanings which really as well as apparently have no connexion with one another.

Let me suggest some further exercises in this region of words, which I will venture to promise that you will find profitable as ministering to the activity of your own minds, as helping to call out a like activity in those of others. Seek to attain a consciousness of the multitude of words which there are, that now used only in a figurative sense, did yet originally rest on some fact of the outward world, vividly presenting itself to the imagination; a fact which the word has incorporated for ever, having become, as all words originally were, the indestructible vesture of a thought.

If I may judge from my own experience, I think



there are few intelligent boys in your schools, who would not feel that they had gotten something, when you had shown them that to "insult" meant properly to leap as on the prostrate body of a foe; "to affront," to strike him on the face; that "to succour" means to run and place oneself under one that is falling, and thus support and sustain him; "to reprehend," to lay hold of him with the intention of forcibly pulling him back from the way of his error; that a man is called "supercilious," because haughtiness with contempt of others expresses itself by the raising of the eyebrows or "supercilium;" that "imbecile," which we use for weak, and now always for weak in intellect, means strictly, (unless indeed we must renounce this etymology,) leaning upon a staff, (in bacillo,) as one aged or infirm might do; that "desultory," which perhaps they have been warned they should not be in their studies, but have never attached any very definite meaning to the warning, means properly leaping as a rider in the circus does from the back of one horse to the back of another, this rider being technically called a "desultor;" and the word being transferred from him to those who suddenly and abruptly change their courses of study. "Trivial," again, is a word borrowed from the life; see three or four persons standing idly at the point where one street bisects at right angles another, and discussing there the worthless gossip, the idle nothings of the day; there you have the living explanation of the words "trivial," "trivialities," such as no explanation which did not thus root

itself in the etymology would ever give you, or enable you to give to others. For there you have the "tres viæ," the "trivium;" and "trivialities" properly mean such talk as is holden by those idle loiterers that gather at these meetings of three roads.

"Rivals" too is a word that by curious steps has attained its present meaning; and the history of the steps can hardly fail to interest. "Rivals" primarily are those who dwell on the banks of the same stream, ("rivaies," from "rivus.") But since, as all experience shows, there is no such fruitful source of contention as a water-right, it would continually happen that these occupants of the opposite banks would be at strife with one another in regard of the periods during which they severally had a right to the use of the stream, turning it off into their own fields before the time, or leaving open the sluices beyond the time, or in other ways interfering, or being counted to interfere, with the rights of their opposite neighbours. And thus the word, which at first applied only to those dwellers on opposite banks of a stream, came afterwards to be used of any who were on any grounds in more or less unfriendly competition with one another.

Or if your future pupils shall be your companions in your walks, (as it always speaks well for a teacher's influence that he is sought not shunned by his pupils in play hours,) how much will there be which you may profitably impart to them, suggested by the names of common things which will meet

you there; how much which you, if you know it, will love to tell, and they, I am sure, will be well pleased to hear. Who would not care, for instance, to know something about the names of our English birds; that the "kingfisher," which attracted all eyes as it darted swiftly by the river's edge, was so called from the *royal* beauty, the *kingly* splendour of its plumage; that the "hawk," if it be not the same word with "havoc," (and it was called "hafoc" in Anglo-Saxon,) has at least a common origin; its very name announcing the "havoc" and destruction which it makes among the smaller birds, just as in the "raven's" name is expressed its greedy, or as we say "ravenous," disposition? Or when they are listening of an evening to the harsh shriekings of the "owl," that the name of this dissonant night-bird is in fact the past participle of "to yell," and differs from "howl" in nothing but its spelling, as plainly comes out in the fact that the diminutive is as often spelt with an *h* as without it—"howlets" as often as "owlets?" Even the little "dabchick" which so haunts our waters here, diving and dipping when any one approaches, it may be as well to know why it has this name, that the first syllable would more correctly be spelt with a *p* than a *b*, this "dap" being the old perfect of "to dip," so that the name is no idle unmeaning thing, but brings out the most salient characteristic of the bird which bears it, its swift diving and "dipping" under the water at every apprehension of danger.

Or taking them into the corn-fields, you may point out how the "cockle" which springs up only

too luxuriantly in some of our Hampshire furrows, acquires its name from that which often it effectually does, namely from its "choking" or strangling the good seed. And the word "field" itself is worth taking note of, for it throws us back upon a period when England was covered, as is a great part of America now, with forests; "field" meaning properly a clearing where the trees have been "felled," or cut down, as in all our early English writers it is spelt without the *i*, "feld" and not "field," even as you will find in them that "wood" and "feld" are continually set over, and contrasted with, one another.

In such ways you may often improve, and without turning play-time into lesson-time, the hours of relaxation and amusement. But I must not here let escape me these words, "relaxation" and "amusement," on which I have lighted as by chance. "Amusement," or as with another striking image we call it, "recreation," what is it, and what does it affirm of itself? Why plainly this, that it must be first earned; for let us only question the word a little closer, and see what it involves. It is plainly, "a musis," that is, a temporary suspension of, and turning away from, severer studies, which severer studies are represented here by the Muses, who, I may just remind you, were the patronesses in old time not of poetry alone, but of history, geometry, and all other studies as well. What shall we then say of them, who would fain have their lives to be *all* "amusement," or who claim it otherwise than as this temporary withdrawal a

musis? The very word condemns them; even as that other word "relaxation" does the same. How can the bow be relaxed or slackened, for this of course is the image, which has not ever been bent, whose string has never been drawn tight? Let us draw it tight by earnest toil, and then we may look to have it from time to time relaxed. Having been attentive and assiduous, then, but not otherwise, we may claim relaxation and amusement. But "attentive" and "assiduous" are themselves words which it is worth our while to realize what they mean. He is "assiduous," who sits close to his work; he is "attentive," who stretches out his neck that so he may bring the organ of hearing nearer to the speaker, and lose none of his words. And then what a lesson the word "diligence" contains. How profitable is it for every one of us to be reminded, as we are reminded when we make ourselves aware of its derivation from "diligō," to love, that the only secret of true industry in our work is love of that work. And as there is a great truth wrapped up in "diligence," what a lie on the other hand lies at the root of our present use of the word "indolence." This is from "in" and "doleo," not to grieve; and "indolence" is thus a state in which we have no grief or pain; so that the word, employed as we now employ it, seems to affirm that indulgence in sloth and ease is that which would constitute for us absence of all pain. Now it may be quite true that "pain" and "pains" are often nearly allied; no one would wish to deny this; but yet these pains hand us over to true

pleasures ; while indolence is so far from yielding what it is so forward to promise, and we with our slothful self-indulgent hearts are so ready to believe, that Cowper spoke only truth, when, perhaps purposing expressly to witness against the falsehood of this word, he spoke of

“Lives spent in *indolence*, and therefore *sad*,”  
not “therefore glad,” as the word would promise.

Let me mention another method in which these studies which I have been urging upon you, may be turned to account in your future work. Doubtless you will ever seek to cherish in others, to keep lively in yourselves, that spirit and temper which attach a special value and interest to all having to do with the land of our birth, that land which the providence of God has assigned as the sphere of our life's work and theirs. Our schools are called “national,” and if we would have them such more than in name we must neglect nothing that will assist us in fostering a national spirit in them. I know not whether this is sufficiently considered among us, and yet I am sure that we cannot have Church schools worthy the name, and least of all in England, unless they are truly national as well. It is the anti-national character of the Romish system, though I do not in the least separate this from its anti-scriptural, which mainly revolts Englishmen ; as we have lately very plainly seen ; and if their sense of this should ever grow weak, their protest against that system would soon lose nearly all of its energy and strength. Now here, as everywhere

else, knowledge must be the food of love. Your pupils must know something about England, if they are to love it; they must see some connexion of its past with its present, of what it has been with what it now is, if they are to feel that past as anything to them.

And as no impresses of the past upon the present are so abiding, so none, when once attention has been awakened to them, are so self-evident as those which names preserve; although without this calling of the attention to them, the most broad and obvious of these foot-prints of time may very probably continue to escape our observation to the end of our lives. Of all the thousands of Englishmen who are aware that the Angles and Saxons established themselves in this island, and that we are in the main descended from them, it would be curious to know how many have realized to themselves that this England means "Angle-land," or that in the names Essex, Sussex, and Middlesex, we preserve a record to this day of East Saxons, South Saxons, and Middle Saxons, who occupied those several portions of the land; or that Norfolk and Suffolk are two broad divisions of "northern" and "southern folk," into which the East Anglian kingdom was divided. I cannot but believe that these Angles and these Saxons, about whom our pupils may be reading, will be to them more like actual men of flesh and blood, who indeed trod this same soil which we are treading now, when we can thus point to the traces of them surviving to the present day, which they have left behind them.

and which England, as long as it is England, will retain.

Then again with regard of the Danes—all of us who are at all acquainted with the early history of our land, will be aware how much Danish blood there is in the veins of Englishmen; what large colonies from Scandinavia, (for probably as many came from Norway as from modern Denmark,) settled in some parts of the kingdom. It will be interesting to show that the limits of this Danish settlement and occupation may even now be confidently traced by the frequent occurrence in all such districts of the names of towns and villages ending in “bye,” which word signified in their language, town, as Netherby, Appleby, Derby. Thus if you examine closely a map of Lincolnshire, one of the chief seats, as is well known, of Danish immigration, you will find that well-nigh a fourth part of the towns and villages have this ending; the whole coast is indeed studded with them; while here in Hampshire it is, I believe, utterly unknown.

Who that has seen London from one of its bridges, with the forest of masts stretching down the river, or has even heard of its commerce, but would learn with interest that London, according to the most probable etymology, is a name formed out of two Celtic words, and means, “City of ships?” Such a prophecy of the future greatness of the great commercial capital of England and of the world lay from the very first in the name which it bore; not to say that this name indicates that from earliest times, before a Roman had set his foot upon



the soil, the wonderfully advantageous position of London for commerce had been discovered and improved.

You are yourselves learning, or hereafter you may be teaching others, the names and number of the English counties or shires. What a dull routine task for them and for you this may be, tasking the memory, but supplying no food for the intellect, no points of attachment for any of its higher powers to take hold of. And yet in these two little words "shire" and "county," if you would make them render up even a small part of their treasure, what lessons of English history are contained. One who knows the rise of these names, and how we come to possess such a double nomenclature, looks far into the social condition of England in that period when the rudimental germs of all that has since made it glorious and great were being laid, and by these words may excellently show how the present links itself on with the remotest past; how of a land, as of a person, it may be truly said, "the child is father of the man." "Shire," as I observed just now, is connected with "shear," "share," and is properly a portion "sheared" or "shorn" off. When a Saxon king would create an earl or alderman, for "earl" is but the contraction of "elder," it did not lie in men's thoughts, who were accustomed then to deal with realities, that such could be, as now it may, a merely titular creation, or could exist without territorial jurisdiction; and a "share" or "shire" was assigned him to govern, which also gave him his title. But at the Conquest this Saxon officer

was displaced by a Norman, the earl by the count—this title of count, borrowed from the later Roman empire, meaning originally “companion” (comes) one who had the honour of being closest companion to the king; and the “shire” was now the “county,” (comitatus,) as governed by this “comes.” In that singular and inexplicable fortune of words, which causes some to disappear and die out under the most favourable circumstances for life, others to hold their ground when all seemed against them, “count” has disappeared from the titles of English nobility, while “earl” has recovered its place; although, in evidence of the essential identity of the two titles, or offices rather, the wife of the earl is entitled a countess; and in further memorial of these great changes that so long ago came over our land, the two names “shire” and “county” equally survive as household words in our mouths.

Let us a little consider, in conclusion, how we may usefully bring our etymologies and our other notices of words to bear on the religious teaching which we would impart in our schools. To do this with much profit we must often deal with words as the queen does with the gold and silver coin of the realm. When this has been current long, and by much use and often passing from man to man, with occasional clipping in dishonest hands, has quite lost the clear brightness, the well-defined sharpness of outline, and a good part of the weight and intrinsic value, which it had when first issued from the royal mint, it is the sovereign’s prerogative to

recall it, and issue it anew, with her image stamped on it afresh, bright and sharp, weighty and full as at first. Now to a process such as this the true mint-masters of language will often submit the words which they use ; and something of this kind we all of us may do. Where use and custom have worn away the significance of words, we too may recall and issue them afresh. And this has been the case with how many ; for example with a word which will be often in your mouths—the “ lessons ” of the day. What is “ lessons ” here for most of us but a lazy synonym for the morning and evening chapters appointed to be read in church ? But realize the word “ lessons,” and what the Church intended in calling these chapters by this name ; namely, that they are to be the daily instruction of her children. Listen to them as such ; address yourselves to their explanation in the spirit of this word ; make your pupils regard them in this light ; show them that, using this name in regard of them, they affirm them to be such, to be not in word only but in truth, daily “ lessons ” for every one.

The “ Bible ” itself,—with no irreverent use of the word, it may yet be no more to us than the sign by which we designate the written Word of God. But if we ask ourselves what the word means, and know that it means simply “ The Book,” so that there was a time when “ bible ” in English would be applied to any book, (in Chaucer it is so,) then how much matter of thought and reflection is here, and in this our present restriction of the word to one book, to the exclusion of all others. So pre-

vailing, that is, has been the sense of Holy Scripture being *the* Book, the worthiest, the best, that which explained all other books, standing up in the midst of all others,—like Joseph's kingly sheaf, to which all the other sheaves did obeisance,—that this name of "Bible" or "Book" has come to be applied to it alone : just as "The Scripture" means no more than "The Writing;" but this inspired Writing has been felt to be so far above all other writings, that this name also it has challenged as exclusively its own.

You will present, I think, to your pupils the Collects which they learn from Sunday to Sunday under a more interesting aspect, when you have taught them that they probably are so called because they "collect," as into a focus, the teaching of the Epistle and Gospel, gathering them up into a single petition ; and from this you may profitably exercise them in tracing the bond of relation which thus will be found ever to exist between the Collect, and the Epistle and Gospel which follow it. Who again will not be pleased to know that "Whit"-Sunday is "White"-Sunday, probably so called because of the multitude of "white"-robed catechumens that used upon this day to be brought to the font? And I am sure there is much to be learned from knowing that the "surname," as distinguished from the Christian name, is the name over and above, not, as I have mentioned already, the "sire"-name, or name received from the father, but "sur"-name, (*super nomen*)—that while there never was a time when every baptized man had not

a Christian name, inasmuch as his personality before God was recognised, yet the surname, the name expressing a man's relation, not to the kingdom of God, but to the worldly society in which he lives, is only of a much later growth, an addition to the other, as the word itself declares. And what a lesson at once in the upgrowth of human society, and in the contrast between it and the heavenly society, might be appended to this explanation. There was a period when only a few had surnames, only a few, that is, had any significance in the order of things temporal ; while the Christian name from the first was common to every man. Surely this may be brought usefully to bear on your exposition of the first words in the Catechism.

And then further, in regard of the long Latin words, which, with all our desire to use all plainness of speech, we yet cannot do without, nor find their adequate substitutes in the other parts of our language, but which must remain the vehicles of so much of the truth by which we live—in explaining these, make it, I would say, your rule always to start, where you can, from the derivation, and to return to that as often as you can. Thus you have before you the word “revelation.” How great a matter, if you can attach some distinct image to the word, and one to which your scholars as often as they hear the word, may mentally recur. Nor is this impossible. God's revelation of Himself is the drawing back of the veil or curtain which concealed Him from men ; not man finding out God, but God declaring or discovering Himself to man ;

all which lies plainly in the word. Or you have the word "absolution:" many will know that it has something to do with the pardon of sins; but in how much more lively a way, to say the least, will they know this, when they know that "to absolve" means "to loosen from:" God's absolution of men is his releasing of them from the bands of sin with which they were tied and bound. Here every one will connect a distinct image with the word, one that will always come to his help when he would realize what its actual meaning is. That which was done for Lazarus naturally, the Lord saying in regard of him, "Loose him, and let him go," the same is done spiritually for us, when we receive the absolution of our sins.

Tell them that "atonement" means "at-one-ment"—the setting at one of those who were at twain before, namely God and man, and they will attach to the word a definite meaning, which perhaps it no way else would have had for them; and from this you may muster the passages in Scripture which describe the sinner's state as one of separation, estrangement, alienation from God, the Christian's state as one in which he walks together with God, because the two are agreed, and at one. Or you have the words "to redeem," "Redeemer," "redemption." Do not lose yourselves here in vague generalities, but fasten on the central point of each of these words, that they have reference to a "buying," and not merely a buying, but a buying "back;" and then put in relation with the words so explained the whole

circle of Scriptures which rest on this image, all, that is, which speak of sin as a slavery, of sinners as servants and bondsmen of an alien lord, of Christ's blood as a ransom, of the condition of the Christian as that of one who has recovered his liberty.

Many words more suggest themselves;\* but with these, as sufficiently indicating what I propose to

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\* I will subjoin in this note some words, several of which I had marked down while sketching out these lectures, with the intention of using them therein; but which, from lack of space, or from one cause or another, I have not employed. They contain, I believe, every one of them, in their derivation or their use, or in both, something that will make it worth your pains to acquaint yourselves with them; either some fact of history, some custom of past times, some truth of the moral or spiritual world, some lively and impressive image, or other noticeable circumstance about them. In most cases a good Dictionary, such as Richardson's, though I cannot promise this in all, will put you in the right position for judging why the word has been suggested to you. The words, to which many as good, some no doubt still better, might easily be added, are these:—absurd, ambition, anthem, barbarous, belief, bigot, candidate, cardinal, civility, classics, clerk, conscience, constable, courtesy, danger, devotion, dispute, fanatic, feudal, fortnight, generous, genius, gentleman, gossip, habit, heresy, homage, husbandry, hypocrite, idiot, iniquity, integrity, knight, legend, maxim, mercy, misunderstanding, mountebank, naughtiness, novel, obligation, peers, philosophy, physician, precarious, prerogative, prodigy, profane, prose, recreant, reflection, religion, reprobate, reputation, right, romance, salary, sardonic, sarcasm, savage, sedition, sincere, sophistry, stationer, superstition, sycophant, urbane, verb, wassail, worship.

you that you should aim at, I shall be satisfied. Only one more I will bring forward ; and that one, because we shall find in it a lesson more for ourselves than for others, and it is with such an one I would fain bring these lectures to a close. How important, I would observe then, is the truth which we express in the naming of our work in this world our "vocation," or, which is the same expressed in homelier Anglo-Saxon, our "calling." What a calming, elevating, solemnizing view of the tasks which we find ourselves set in this world to do, this word would give us, if we did but realize it to the full. We did not come to our work by accident ; we did not choose it for ourselves ; but, under much which may wear the appearance of accident and self-choosing, came to it by God's leading and appointment. What a help is this thought to enable us to appreciate justly the dignity of our work, though it were far humbler work, even in eyes of men, than that of any one of us present ! What an assistance in calming unsettled thoughts and desires, such as would make us wish to be something else than that which we are ! What a source of confidence, when we are tempted to lose heart, and to doubt whether we shall be able to carry through our work with any blessing or profit to ourselves or to others ! It is our "vocation," our "calling ;" and He who "called" us to it, will fit us for it, and strengthen us in it.



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